THE ARGUMENTS OF THE Books and Chapters OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,

With Practical Observations.

Ja: Dunlop

Tranſlated from the Original Manuſcript of the Reverend and Learned Mr. OSTERVALD, Profeſſor of Divinity, and one of the Miniſters of *Neufchatel* in *Swiſſerland*,

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ARGUMENTS

OF THE

Books and Chapters

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT

TO HER

ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS ANNE, &c.

MADAM,

THE Treatise which I presume to lay at the Feet of your Royal Highness, consists of an Enumeration of the

Arguments of the Books and Chapters in the New-Teſtament, accompanied with Theological and Moral Reflexions upon all of them. It was compiled by that Eminent Divine Mr. *Oſtervald*, at the Requeſt of a SOCIETY, that has diſtinguiſh'd it ſelf by the moſt worthy of all Purpoſes, the Endeavour of PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE. The Work could hardly have a greater Recommendation than that of ſuch an Aſſembly; but I can name a ſtill higher Advantage to it, the Approbation of your Illuſtrious Mother.

That

That it may be uſeful to your Highneſs, and your Siſters, by forwarding you in the Imitation of Her Chriſtian and Royal Virtues and Accompliſhments, is the moſt ſincere and conſtant Prayers of,

MADAM,

Your Royal Highneſs's

Moſt Humble, and

Moſt Obedient Servant,

John Chamberlayne.

The Dedication.

That it may be useful to your Highness, and your Sisters, by forwarding you in the Imitation of Her Christian and Royal Virtues and Accomplishments, is the most sincere and constant Prayers of,

MADAM,

Your Royal Highness's

Most Humble and

Most Obedient Servant,

John Chamberlayne.

THE ARGUMENTS OF THE Books and Chapters OF THE NEW TESTAMENT:

With practical Obſervations.

St. *Matthew.*

CHAP. I.

IN this Goſpel we have the Hiſtory of the Birth of our Lord, of his Life, of his Death, of his Reſurrection, and of his Aſcenſion into Heaven. This is the firſt of the Four Goſpels; it was writ by the Apoſtle St. *Matthew*, about eight Years (as it is thought) after that *Jeſus Chriſt*

had left this World. In the firſt Chapter of this Goſpel we ſee, I. The Genealogy of *Jeſus Chriſt*, from *Abraham* down to *Joſeph*, the Husband of the bleſſed Virgin. II. A ſhort Relation of the Conception and Birth of our Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IT is our Duty, not only to hearken always with great Attention and Reverence to the Reading of the Goſpel, but to read it our ſelves, and to meditate upon it continually, and to make the utmoſt Advantage we can of the Inſtructions contain'd in it. I. The Genealogy of *Jeſus Chriſt*, which is recited in the firſt Chapter of St. *Matthew*, ſhews that He is deſcended from the Patriarch *Abraham*, and from King *David*, as was foretold by the Prophets. And II. The Hiſtory of his Conception and his Birth, teaches us that he was born of the Virgin *Mary* after a wonderful manner, by the Operation of the Holy Spirit, agreeably to what had been ſaid formerly by the Prophet *Iſaiah*: Both theſe Things prove that *Jeſus* is the Meſſiah whom God had promiſed to ſend, and that it was in Him that the Promiſes of God, and the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament, have had their Accompliſhment; this obliges us to receive his Doctrine, to obey Him, and to render Thanks to God for having given us his only Son for our Redeemer, *Which was made of the Seed of* David *according to the Fleſh*, Rom. i. 3. *And who is over all, God bleſſed for ever*, Amen. *Rom.* ix. 5.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THIS Chapter contains Four Things. I. The Arrival of the Wiſe-Men of the *Eaſt* that came to worſhip *Jeſus* after he was Born. II. The Retreat of *Joſeph* and *Mary*, who fled into *Egypt* with the Child *Jeſus*, to avoid the Rage of *Herod*. III. The Slaughter of the Children of *Bethlehem*, whom *Herod* cauſed to be Murthered, hoping to deſtroy our Lord among them. IV. The Return of *Joſeph* and *Mary* to *Judea*, after the Death of *Herod*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THESE are the Obſervations that may be made upon this Chapter. I. The firſt is, that the Wiſe Men came from a far Country to worſhip *Jeſus* after his Birth, and that they were guided towards Him by a miraculous Star; God was pleaſed thereby to render that Birth illuſtrious, and to ſhew the Dignity of the Perſon of our Lord; it likewiſe denoted that the Gentiles were about to be called to the Knowledge of Him. II. The Homage which theſe Wiſe Men of the *Eaſt* performed to *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Gifts they preſented to Him, ſhould excite us that know He is our God, and our Saviour, to worſhip Him, to offer up to Him our Prayers, our Praiſes, and our Hearts, and in general, to devote to Him all that is in our Power. III. We ſee in the Behaviour of *Herod* towards the Wiſe Men, and in the Maſſacre which he made of the Children of *Bethlehem*, the Craft and Cruelty of that Prince; we may farther obſerve from thence, that our Saviour was expoſed, even from his Birth, to great Perils,

rils, which ſhews, that his *Kingdom was not of this World*, and that He was Born for Sufferings; but we may likewiſe take notice, that God, by the Warnings which He gave to the Wiſe Men, and afterwards to *Joſeph*, defeated *Herod*'s Deſigns, and that all the Meaſures which that unjuſt and cruel Prince had taken to deſtroy *Jeſus*, as ſure as he thought them, and as they appear'd to be, could not prevent our Lord from being ſaved alive, nor from returning into *Judea*, where He afterwards exercis'd his Miniſtry. All theſe Events may convince us, that Providence did direct, after a particular manner, all that happen'd to *Jeſus Chriſt*, and that the utmoſt Endeavours of Men, can never hinder the Execution of the Deſigns of God, nor hurt thoſe whom He protects.

CHAP. III.

THIS Chapter conſiſts of Two Parts, I. In the Firſt, mention is made of the Preaching and Miniſtry of *John* the Baptiſt. And, II. In the Second, the Evangeliſt relates the Hiſtory of the Baptiſm of our Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WHAT we are to obſerve in general upon the firſt Part of this Chapter is, that before the Appearance of *Jeſus Chriſt*, *John* the Baptiſt, according to what the Prophets had foretold, was ſent from God to declare to the *Jews* the Coming of the Meſſiah, and to exhort them to Repentance; by which, God was pleaſed to teach them, that the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, which they expected, was about to be manifeſted, but that it would be a Spiritual and Heavenly Kingdom, and not a Temporal or worldly

worldly one, as they imagined; which was very neceſſary to diſpoſe the *Jews* to believe in *Jeſus Chriſt*, and to receive his Doctrine. The Preaching of *John* the Baptiſt teaches us, that Repentance and Holineſs of Life, is a Qualification, without which one cannot be the Diſciple of *Jeſus Chriſt*, nor enter into the Kingdom of God. It likewiſe informs us, that as the unbelieving *Jews* vainly boaſted, that they were the Children of *Abraham*, it is no Advantage to Hypocrites to be externally in the divine Covenant; that *Jeſus Chriſt* diſcerns them, and knows them, and that He will one Day cleanſe his Church, by caſting the Wicked into everlaſting Fire, and by receiving the truly Faithful into his Kingdom. II. As for what relates to the Baptiſm of our Lord, it muſt be obſerv'd, that when He was about to enter upon the Diſcharge of his Office, He was Baptized by St. *John* his Forerunner; that upon this Occaſion, the Holy Ghoſt deſcended upon him in a viſible Manner, and that God cauſed a Voice to be heard from Heaven, whereby He declared that *Jeſus* was his beloved Son. God was pleaſed that all theſe Things ſhould happen, to ſhew both to *John* the Baptiſt, and to all the World, that *Jeſus* was the promiſed Meſſiah: Thus the Hiſtory of his Baptiſm obliges us to conſider Him as the Son of God, to hearken only to Him, and to render Him an inviolable Obedience. It likewiſe engages us to reverence the Baptiſm we have received, and by which we have been devoted to God, to be his Children, and Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

CHAP. IV.

ST. *Matthew* here relates, I. The Hiſtory of the Temptation of *Jeſus Chriſt*. II. The manner in which he began to exerciſe his Miniſtry in *Galilee*, by declaring that the Kingdom of God was come, by electing his Apoſtles, and by working Miracles.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. IT may be obſerv'd in general upon the Hiſtory of the Temptation, that the Deſign of the Devil was to try, whether *Jeſus* was the Son of God; and that it pleaſed God to ſuffer this Temptation, to the end that the Devil being convinc'd of that Truth, might Reverence the Power of *Jeſus Chriſt*; and to the end that it might appear, that our Lord was come into the World to deſtroy the Kingdom of *Satan*, upon which we ought to conſider, that ſince *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf was tempted, we ſhould not be ſurpriſed, if we alſo are expoſed to various Temptations; but this Hiſtory does likewiſe teach us, that we ought, after the Example of our Lord, to reſiſt Temptations, and particularly ſuch as will lead us into Diſtruſt, or into Preſumption and a wrong Confidence, or into the Love of Glory, and the good Things of this World; or laſtly, ſuch as may any ways tend to turn us from the true Service of God, and from that Faithfulneſs which we owe Him: And the Method which Chriſt made uſe of to repel the Temptations of *Satan*, by quoting the Holy Scriptures, ſhews us, that it is by Faith and the Word of God that we may defeat Temptations, and quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked one. II. When we read that *Jeſus Chriſt* began to exerciſe his Miniſtry

ſtry in *Galilee*, by Preaching Repentance, as *John* Baptiſt had done, we ought from thence to acknowledge the Neceſſity of a good Life. That which is related in this Chapter, that our Lord choſe Fiſhermen for his Apoſtles, proves, that the wonderful Succeſs which their Preaching had afterwards, did not proceed from themſelves, and that it is only to be aſcribed to God, who endow'd them with his Gifts. *Laſtly*, The wonderful Cures by which *Jeſus* made himſelf known at firſt, tended to ſhew, that He was ſent from God, and the Divinity of his Word, and that He came into the World only for the Good and Salvation of Mankind.

CHAP. V. 1,——20.

THIS Chapter, together with the two following, contains the Sermon that *Jeſus Chriſt* made upon the Mount. In the beginning of this Sermon, our Lord does Two Things. I. He declares who thoſe be whom we ought to look upon as Bleſſed. II. He ſpeaks of the Obligations incumbent on his Diſciples to live in great Holineſs.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Sermon of our Lord, which is contained in the V*th*, VI*th*, and VII*th* Chapters of St. *Matthew*, ought to be continually read, and meditated by Chriſtians; the Deſign of *Jeſus Chriſt* in general is, thereby to inſtruct us in the chief Duties of a Chriſtian Life; for which Reaſon, we ought to liſten to the Reading of thoſe Chapters with great Application, and to regulate our Behaviour by the Divine Precepts we find therein. There are Two Reflexions that may be made upon what has been ſaid. I. The Beatitudes teach us wherein the true Hap-

pineſs of Man conſiſts, and what are the Characters of the true Diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt*, namely, not to ſet our Hearts upon Riches or Pleaſures, or upon the Glory of this World; but to live in an Indifference for the Goods of Fortune, in Meekneſs, Humility, Holineſs and Peace, and even joyfully to undergo Perſecution for the ſake of the Goſpel. II. *Jeſus Chriſt* has taught us, that his Diſciples ought to diſtinguiſh themſelves from other Men, by the Purity of their Lives, and endeavour to enlighten and edifie them by their Inſtructions and good Examples. He has alſo declared, that He was ſo far from coming into the World to diſpenſe with the Obſervation of the Law of God, that, on the contrary, He came to excite Men more ſtrongly to accompliſh it, and that after the moſt perfect Manner; that thoſe who ſhould not exceed the Righteouſneſs of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, (Perſons that paſſed among the *Jews* for the moſt Knowing, and the moſt Holy,) would not deſerve to be called his Diſciples; and that He will receive into his Kingdom, none but ſuch as ſhall keep his Commandments. The Effect which all theſe Precepts of our Lord ought to produce, is to make us comprehend the indiſpenſible Obligation we lye under, to ſtudy to lead a holy Life, and even to aſpire with all our Might to a high degree of Perfection.

CHAP. V. 21,——48.

JESUS CHRIST being deſirous to ſhew that his Diſciples are called to a great Holineſs, teaches them that it is not ſufficient to abſtain from notorious Crimes, and ſuch as are expreſly condemned in the Law of God; but alſo, that thoſe Sins which appear leſs conſiderable, are to be avoided, and above all, the Mo-

Motions of the Heart to be regulated. In this View He recites, I. The Commandments concerning Murder. II. Adultery. III. Oaths. IV. Revenge. And, V. The Love of our Neighbour. He corrects the falſe Interpretations which the *Jews* put upon thoſe Commandments, and gives us the true Notions of them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Explanation which our Lord gives to the chief Commandments of the Law, teaches us, that they are not only great Crimes, and crying Sins, which God prohibits, and which He puniſhes, but that He likewiſe condemns and corrects us for evil Thoughts, and evil Deſires, which the *Jewiſh* Doctors conſidered only as light Faults: Beſides this general and very important Leſſon, Chriſt inſtructs us in theſe Four particular Duties. I. That Wrath, Hatred againſt one's Neighbour, injurious and contemptible Appellations, do ſubject us to Condemnation, as well as Murder, that far from hating any one, we ought to labour to have Peace with all Men; and that we ſhould not allow our ſelves to come before God, and to offer Him our Prayers, without doing all that lies in our Power to be reconciled to thoſe that have any thing againſt us. II. The ſecond Duty relates to Purity and Chaſtity. Our Lord teaches us, that impure Deſires render us Guilty before God, as much as the very Act of Adultery or Fornication; that in order to be Chaſt, we muſt watch over our Selves, mortifie our Senſes, pluck out an Eye, cut off a Hand or Foot, that is to ſay, deprive our Selves of every thing that would be moſt dear and agreeable to us, if it ſhould be any Occaſion of Falling. He likewiſe teaches us, that the Bands of Marriage cannot

not be diſſolved but by Adultery. III. The third Inſtruction relates to Swearing; we find it is not ſufficient to avoid Perjury, which is a very great Crime; but that we ought likewiſe to be ſcrupulous in breaking Oaths, tho' not made by the Name of God, and entirely to abſtain from vain and raſh Oaths, of what kind ſoever they be, ſince they are forbid by the Law of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and contrary to that Reverence that is due to the Divinity. IV. The fourth Duty, is that of Charity, and the Love of our Neighbour. What Chriſt commands upon that Head is, to abſtain from Revenge, to bear Injuries, rather than to return Evil for Evil; to Love all Men, even thoſe that hate us, therein to imitate our Heavenly Father, who does good to all, even to the Wicked and Ungrateful: This is the Law of the Goſpel, and of true Charity, and in the Practice of all theſe Duties, we ſhall find our Perfection and our Glory.

CAAP. VI. 1,——18.

OUR Lord ſpeaks here, I. Of Alms. II. Of Prayer. III. Of Faſting. He ſhews how we muſt diſcharge thoſe Religious Acts, and exhorts us above all to avoid Hypocriſie and Oſtentation.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS firſt Part of the *Sixth* Chapter of St. *Matthew* teaches us, I. That Alms, Prayer, and Faſting, are thoſe Duties of Religion that ought not to be neglected; and as to Faſting in particular, we muſt take notice, that ſince Chriſt has preſcribed Rules to us about the manner of Faſting, as well as about Prayer and Alms, his Deſign was, that his Diſciples ſhould Faſt,

Faſt, not only upon ſolemn and publick Occaſions, but likewiſe that they ſhould perform thoſe kinds of private Faſts which are here meant, they being very uſeful to mortifie the Fleſh, and to diſpoſe us for Humiliation and Prayer. II. We ſhould infer from hence, that Hypocriſie and Vain-glory are to be moſt carefully avoided when we do our Charities, when we Pray, and when we Faſt; and that we ought to diſcharge theſe Duties and all others with Sincerity and Humility, remembring that we are in the Preſence of God, who ſees all that paſſes in the moſt ſecret Corners of our Heart; and that Hypocrites, far from Reaping any Reward, have nothing to expect but moſt rigorous Puniſhment. III. We ought well to obſerve, that in order to teach his Diſciples how to Pray, our Saviour gave them a Form, in that which is called the Lord's Prayer. Since that Prayer has *Jeſus Chriſt* for its Author, and that it comprehends in few Words all that is neceſſary for the Glory of God and our own Happineſs, the Uſe that we are to make of it is, *Firſt*, To bring along with us great Reverence and Attention, Zeal, and Fervour, when we offer it to God: And in the *ſecond* Place, to adapt, not only our Prayers, but likewiſe our Thoughts and Behaviour, to that excellent Pattern which Chriſt has left us. *Laſtly*, Our Lord has declared to us moſt expreſly, that we muſt not hope that God ſhould hear and pardon us, if we do not likewiſe pardon all thoſe that have offended us; concerning which we ought to examine our ſelves very ſtrictly, as often as we come before God to beg his Grace, and to offer up our Prayers.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI. 19,——34.

JESUS CHRIST teaches his Diſciples, that they muſt not take Pains to heap up worldly Riches, nor to be ſollicitous for the good Things of this Life; exhorts them to depend upon Providence, and before all Things to ſeek the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Deſign of our Lord in what has been read, is to teach us, That Chriſtians ought not to ſet their Hearts upon worldly Things, nor too eagerly to hunt after the Poſſeſſion thereof, but that they ought rather labour to acquire the good Things of the other World. He repreſents to us, that in this View, the Goods of this World are vain and uncertain, and that many Accidents may deprive us of them; whereas, the good Things of Heaven are moſt excellent, and nothing can take them from us. He tells us, in the next place, That it is very dangerous to love Riches, that ſuch Love blinds us, and faſtens our Inclinations to the Earth, and that it is not poſſible to ſerve God, to love Him, to have our Heart free and lifted up to Him, whilſt we are entangled with the Love of the Goods of this Life. *Jeſus Chriſt* does not only forbid us to love Riches, but even commands us not to be uneaſie, or too ſollicitous for the Things that are neceſſary to ſupport our Lives, exhorting us to truſt in Providence, which, as it takes care for Birds, and other Creatures, will much more provide for the

Wants

Wants of its own Children, who are of a more excellent Nature, and deſign'd for Immortality.

Our Saviour condemns thoſe Temporal Cares which are exceſſive, and attended with Inquietude and Diſtruſt, and He ſhews that ſuch Cares are unprofitable, and beſides, unworthy of Chriſtians. *Laſtly*, He exhorts us to endeavour above all Things to pleaſe God, and to attain the Kingdom of Heaven, promiſing us, that if we do ſo, God will grant us all Things neceſſary for the Life of the Body. Let us imprint in our Minds theſe Divine Leſſons; let them always be preſent to us in the midſt of our worldly Concerns, to the end that they may ſecure us from too ſtrict a Union with them, and engage us chiefly to ſeek after the Eternal Goods, that are reſerved for us in Heaven: God grant us this Grace. *Amen.*

CHAP. VII. 1,——14.

OUR Lord Diſcourſes here, I. Of raſh Judgments; of the Diſcretion with which Truth ought to be propoſed. II. Of Prayer, and its Efficacy; He preſcribes Rules for Righteouſneſs and Charity. And, III. exhorts us to enter in at the ſtrait Gate.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter contains ſeveral weighty Inſtructions. I. The *Firſt* is, not to judge raſhly of our Neighbour, nor to blame him with too great Severity, but to acknowledge our own Faults, and to amend them, rather than pry too curiouſly into, and reprove the Faults of other Men. II. The *Second* is, not

not to caſt holy Things to Dogs; this is a prudential Advice, the Meaning whereof is, That when we have to do with carnal and prophane Men, who proudly and contemptuouſly reject the Doctrine of the Goſpel, we ought not to offer it to them, for fear of expoſing Religion and Truth to their Contempt, and making them hate it, inſtead of loving it. III. Our Lord exhorts us to pray to God with Reliance upon Him, aſſuring us, that Prayer is of very great Efficacy, provided it be attended with Zeal and Perſeverance, and that we ask of God thoſe Things that are really Good; this He ſhews by the Compariſon between God and our natural Parents, who never deny their Children the Things that are neceſſary for them. IV. He gives us here the Rule of Juſtice and Charity, which is, to do by others, as we would have them do by us; this is a moſt perfect Rule, and at the ſame time, no leſs ſimple and plain, and we ought always to have it before our Eyes. V. *Laſtly*, The Lord exhorts his Diſciples to enter into the ſtrait Gate, that is to ſay, to follow the Path of that Faith and Piety which leads to Salvation, notwithſtanding that few People walk in the ſame Way, and that it is contrary to humane Paſſions and Inclinations, and even though it ſhould ſometimes expoſe us to Perſecution; and He commands us to avoid the Paths of Error and Vice, which indeed are pleaſing to Fleſh and Blood, and wherein many People walk, but which leads them to Deſtruction.

CHAP. VII. 15,——29.

I. CHRIST warns us againſt falſe Prophets. II. He declares, that not all who call Him their Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. III. And ſhews us by a Parable, that it is in vain to hear his Word, if we do not practiſe that which it teaches us.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Part of the *Seventh* Chapter of St. *Matthew*, our Lord, I. Bids us beware of Believing all Kinds of Doctrines and Teachers, and to avoid the falſe Prophets and Impoſtors that were among the *Jews*, and of whom they were to expect a greater Number afterwards. The Rule which He gives thereupon is, to judge them by their Fruits; that is, by their Works and Behaviour, as well as by the Effects which their Doctrine may produce, taking notice whether it tends to the Glory of God, and to make Mankind better. II. After that, He formally declares, that all thoſe who profeſs his Religion, and call Him their Lord, ſhall not enter into Heaven; and that He will receive none but ſuch as perform his Will; and that many who have known him, who have preach'd his Goſpel, and even wrought Miracles, ſhall be ſhut out of his Kingdom at the laſt Day, becauſe they have not kept his Commandments. III. *Laſtly*, He concludes this Diſcourſe by the Compariſon of a Houſe founded upon a Rock, with another built upon Sand; by which He ſhews, that 'tis in vain to hear his Word, to endeavour to acquire the Knowledge of his Doctrine, and even to embrace the

the Profeſſion thereof, if we do not obſerve that which He commands; and that thoſe who fail in this eſſential Duty, can never perſevere, nor reſiſt Temptation. Thus we are taught by this Similitude, what uſe we ought to make of the Goſpel, and particularly of this admirable Diſcourſe or Sermon of our Saviour, which ends here. The Lord give us Grace to make a right Uſe of it, and to put in Practice the Divine Leſſons contained therein.

CHAP. VIII. 1,——17.

ST. *Matthew* relates ſeveral Miracles of *Jeſus Chriſt*. I. The Healing of a Leper. II. That of the Servant of a Gentile Captain. III. That of St. *Peter*'s Mother in Law, and ſeveral other Diſtempers.

Reflexions after the Reading.

AS it is in this Chapter that the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Miracles begins, the firſt Obſervation that we ſhall make, relates to thoſe Miracles in general; we diſcover here, I. The infinite Power of our Lord, which appears by his Healing all Kinds of Diſeaſes, and Performing all thoſe wonderful Works by his Word only. II. His Goodneſs and Charity towards Men, thoſe Miracles having been nothing elſe but Acts of Beneficence. III. We are to conſider the Deſign of theſe Miracles, which is to convince Men that *Jeſus* was ſent from God, and to engage them to believe in Him; for which Reaſon the Miracles that He wrote, were commonly for the ſake of ſuch as believed He was able to do them. Beſides theſe general Reflexions, which ought always to be preſent to our Minds when we read the Goſpel,

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it is to be obſerved, that in the Cure of the Leper, our Lord had reſpect to his Faith and his Prayer; whereby we may ſee, that He ſaves and delivers thoſe who have recourſe to Him with Truſt and Humility: And farther, if *Jeſus Chriſt* order'd the Leper to go and ſhew himſelf to the High Prieſt, and to offer what was commanded by the Law, it was to the end the *Jews* might be convinced that he was quite cured, and that they might not accuſe our Lord of being an Enemy to the Law of *Moſes*. The Healing the Centurion's Servant is particularly remarkable, for the profound Humility, and admirable Faith of that Man, who did not think himſelf worthy to receive Chriſt into his Houſe; and that, without coming to him, He needed only ſay the Word, and the Servant would be healed. The Praiſes which *Jeſus Chriſt* gave to the Faith of that Officer, (who was born a Heathen,) ſaying, that He had not found ſuch great Faith even among the *Jews*, oblige us to take great Notice of that Example, and to imitate the Faith and Humility of the Centurion. It is likewiſe obſervable, that *Jeſus* foretold, upon this Occaſion, that many ſhould come from the Eaſt, and from the Weſt, and ſit down in the Kingdom of Heaven, when the Children of the Kingdom ſhould be caſt out; which was as much as to ſay, that the *Gentiles* ſhould be admitted into the Divine Covenant, and the *Jews* rejected; as was ſoon after verified by the Event. *Laſtly*, We ought to hearken very carefully to what St. *Matthew* ſays about the Healing of St. *Peter*'s Mother in Law, and ſeveral other ſick Perſons; namely, That our Lord wrought all theſe Miracles, to ſhew that He had taken upon Himſelf all our Infirmities and Diſeaſes; the Meaning whereof is, He was a charitable

Saviour, and that He only came into the World to do good to Mankind; to deliver them from all their Miseries, and chiefly from their Sins.

CHAP. VIII. 18,—34.

WE see here *Three* Things. I. That which our Saviour said to one of the Scribes, and to a Disciple that desired to follow Him. II. The Miracle He did in stilling a Tempest. III. The Cure of two Demoniacks.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Answer which *Jesus Christ* returned to a Scribe that was desirous to follow Him, tended to make him sensible, that he was not to expect worldly Advantages in his Service; and what He said to one of his Disciples, that he should *leave the Dead to bury their Dead*, signified that he ought to leave the Care of Temporal Things to those that were not enlighten'd with the Light of the Gospel; and that those whom He called to be his Disciples, should follow Him without delay, and be ready to forsake every thing, and to renounce the Things of this Life, even such as are Lawful and Innocent, when they hinder us from discharging the Duties of our Calling. II. In the Miracle that our Saviour wrought for laying the Storm, we may observe on one Hand, his Power in Calming the Winds and the Sea by his Word only; and on the other, the Weakness of the Apostles, who were afraid of Perishing. This Event, which tended to confirm their Faith, ought to fill us with an entire Confidence in

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the Power and Goodneſs of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and teach us to fear nothing whilſt He is our Protector. III. The Hiſtory of thoſe Demoniacks whom our Saviour healed, ſhews us, that the Devil did then exerciſe his Power over Men, but that Chriſt was come to take away that Power from him, and to deſtroy his Kingdom. As to what happen'd to the Herd of Swine which ran headlong into the Sea after the Devils had entred into them, by the Permiſſion of our Lord, it muſt be conſider'd, that He was pleaſed by this means to try and puniſh the Inhabitants of that Country, and to ſhew that the Men whom He had healed were really poſſeſſed; that He had Power over Devils, and that thoſe evil Spirits could do nothing without his Permiſſion; and the whole may ſerve to convince Men of the Power of *Jeſus Chriſt*, to inform them of the End of his coming into the World, and fully to perſuade them of the Truth of his Doctrine.

CHAP. IX. 1,——17.

WHAT we are about to read here, contains, I. The Cure of a Man that was troubled with a Palſie. II. The Calling of St. *Matthew* to the Office of an Apoſtle; and Chriſt's Anſwer to thoſe that were offended at his Eating with Sinners. III. His Reply to the Diſciples of *John* the Baptiſt, when they asked Him, why his Diſciples did not Faſt as well as they.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THERE may be Two Reflexions made upon the Healing the Paralitical Perſon: The *firſt*, that our Lord had regard to the Faith

of that Man, and of thoſe that preſented him; which ſhews, that it is by Faith, and by an humble Recourſe to *Jeſus Chriſt*, that we partake of the Effects of his Grace. The *ſecond*, That *Jeſus Chriſt* had not only Power to heal the Sick, but likewiſe that of Pardoning Sin. This obliges us to look upon Him as our Judge and our God; and to put our ſelves into a Condition of obtaining from Him the Remiſſion of our Sins by Repentance and Faith. II. The Anſwer our Lord returned to thoſe that found fault at his eating with Publicans, and other People of a bad Life, teacheth us that He came into the World to ſave Sinners, and to call them to Repentance. This is a Doctrine which ſets before our Eyes the Mercy of God towards thoſe that ſin againſt Him; but which ſhews us at the ſame time, that the Deſign of the Saviour of the World was to bring them to Repentance, and that without it there is no attaining to Salvation. III. What our Lord ſaid upon his Diſciples not obſerving the uſual Faſts, like the Diſciples of *John* the Baptiſt, muſt be underſtood thus: That *Jeſus Chriſt* had his Reaſons for not obliging his Diſciples to Faſt regularly, and for not expoſing them as yet to great Sufferings; that the Time would come, when they ſhould be called, not only to Faſt, but likewiſe to undergo the greateſt Sufferings; but whilſt He was with them, He ſpar'd their Weakneſs, becauſe they were not as yet in a Condition to bear thoſe ſevere Tryals through which they were to paſs afterwards; this is what He repreſents by the Compariſons of old Cloth, and of old Bottles; ſo that what Chriſt ſays in this Place, does not ſignifie that He condemns Faſting, or a Life of Mortification, but only that He had regard to the State his

Diſci-

Diſciples were in at that Time; but for the reſt, this Doctrine plainly ſuppoſes that Chriſt calls his Diſciples to Sufferings, and to a mortify'd Life, not to Eaſe or Pleaſures.

CHAP. IX. 18,——38.

THE Evangeliſt relates ſeveral Miracles of our Saviour. I. The Cure of a Woman diſeaſed by loſs of Blood. II. The Reſurrection of a young Maiden. III. The Cure of two blind Perſons, and that of a dumb Man poſſeſs'd by the Devil. IV. At the end of this Chapter, our Lord exhorts his Diſciples to pray to God that He would ſend Perſons to labour in the Eſtabliſhment of his Kingdom.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE ſeveral Miracles related in this Chapter, are new Proofs of the Power and Goodneſs of *Jeſus Chriſt*; but there are Two among them of which we ought to take a more particular Notice. The *firſt* is, the Healing of a Woman that had been diſtemper'd with a Flux of Blood for *Twelve* Years. We ſee by this Hiſtory, that our Lord cured the moſt inveterate and moſt incurable Diſtempers; but above all, we ought to obſerve therein, I. The Humility and Faith of that Woman, who, not daring to ſpeak to Chriſt, believ'd that if ſhe could only touch his Garment ſhe ſhould be Whole, which likewiſe happen'd to her as ſhe had thought. This Example ſhews us, that our Lord has reſpect to Humility and Faith, and that the infallible Means of obtaining his Favour, is to have recourſe to Him with a deep Humility, and an entire Reliance. II. The other Miracle was, the Reſurrection of

the Daughter of *Jairus.* This Miracle proves that *Jesus Christ* had not only the Power of Healing the Infirm, but that He could even restore Life to the Dead; which ought fully to convince us, that He was sent from God, and confirm us in the Belief and Expectation of our own Resurrection. III. We may observe about the End of the Chapter, that our Saviour seeing the People which followed Him scattered like Sheep without a Shepherd, and wanting Instruction and good Guides, took pity on them, and bid his Disciples *Pray the Lord of the Harvest, to send Labourers into his Harvest.* This shews the great Goodness and Zeal wherewith Christ was animated, and should inspire us with the same Sentiments of Compassion and Kindness to those that wander out of the Way, and stir us up to beseech God, that he would send faithful Ministers, that might labour with Efficacy in the Conversion of Men, and Establishment of his Kingdom.

CHAP. X. 1,——15.

WE see here, I. The Calling and the Names of the Twelve Apostles. II. The Commands which our Lord gave them when He sent them the first Time into *Judea*, to declare that the Kingdom of God was come.

Reflexions after the Reading.

HERE are three Things to be observ'd for our Instruction. I. The *first* is, the Calling of the blessed Apostles, whom *Jesus Christ* chose to be the Witnesses of his Life, his Preaching, and his Miracles, and to the End that they themselves might go and declare the Gospel and work Miracles likewise, first among the

the *Jews*, and afterwards throughout the World. Now since it was by their Means that the Christian Religion has been establish'd, and that God has been pleas'd to preserve their Names in the Sacred Writings, their Memory ought to be blessed in the Church; we ought to imitate them in their Zeal, their Patience, and all the other Virtues that have shin'd forth so conspicuously in them; and we are bound to submit our selves to the Doctrine which they taught, as well by Word of Mouth as in Writing. II. The *second* Thing to be consider'd is, that though *Jesus Christ* forbad his Apostles to go among the *Gentiles*, or the *Samaritans*, and though He commanded them to preach the Gospel to the *Jews* only, it was for prudential Reasons, namely, that the *Jews* might not be scandaliz'd therewith, and because the Gospel was not to be preach'd to the others till after his Ascension. And because the Time was not yet come that the Apostles should go to all Parts of the World, it was for that Reason that He bid them to make no Provision for their Journey, it being not necessary then, forasmuch as they were not to go very far off, and that their Travels were to be but very short; another Reason likewise was, to teach them thereby to depend upon Providence. III. In the Instructions which our Lord gave his Apostles, we see on one hand, that those who preach the Gospel, ought to do it with great Zeal, Disinterestedness, and Prudence; and on the other, that the Gospel is not receiv'd, but by those who have a true Heart, and who are Meek and Peaceable; that it is to Persons of this Character, that Ministers of *Jesus Christ* should apply themselves; but when they meet with People who will not hear nor receive them, they should leave them;

and that thoſe who thus reject the Goſpel, do reject *Jeſus Chriſt*, depriving themſelves of their own Salvation, and expoſing themſelves to the greater Condemnation.

CHAP. X. 16,——42.

JESUS CHRIST warns his Apoſtles of what was to befal them in the Exerciſe of their Miniſtry. He foretels them, that they ſhould be Perſecuted, and meet with great Troubles on account of the Goſpel; but to encourage them, He promiſes them the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, and the Protection of God. He ſets before them his own Example; He exhorts them not to fear Men, but God alone; He declares what will happen to thoſe who confeſs Him, and what to thoſe who deny Him before Men: *Laſtly*, He promiſes to bleſs and reward thoſe that ſhall receive his Diſciples, and do good to them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. IN this Diſcourſe of our Lord, we have a ſtrong Proof of the Divinity of the Chriſtian Religion, ſince the Apoſtles who preach'd it, have been expoſed to divers Perſecutions, and have ſealed the Truth of the Goſpel by their Sufferings and Blood, and that nevertheleſs this Religion has not fail'd to be Eſtabliſh'd. II. The Miniſters of *Jeſus Chriſt* may learn from hence, to diſcharge their Office with Faithfulneſs, and with an holy Boldneſs, with much Wiſdom and Prudence, and with a firm Reliance upon God, without fearing Men, or their Perſecution. III. We may make here ſeveral uſeful Reflexions, whereof theſe are the chief: That thoſe who make Profeſſion of Truth

Truth and Piety, do often expoſe themſelves to the Hatred and Perſecution of the World; that true Chriſtians ought not to faint, nor loſe their Courage, for ſuch Things; and that neither Fear nor Shame ſhould hinder them from diſcharging their Duty; that God aſſiſts and ſupports his faithful Servants, and all thoſe that fear Him, and protects in a particular manner ſuch as be Perſecuted for his ſake; that we ſhould not fear the Men that can only hurt our Body, but God alone, who can caſt both Body and Soul into Hell; that Troubles and Diviſions are often raiſed in the World on account of the Goſpel; but that they only happen by the Fault of Men; that Chriſtians ought to be ready to renounce all that is deareſt to them in this World to follow *Jeſus Chriſt*. And, *Laſtly*, that our Lord will abundantly recompence the Piety and Charity of thoſe that ſhall receive and aſſiſt his Diſciples. Let us carefully meditate upon all theſe Things, that we may be thereby more and more encouraged to make an open Profeſſion of the Religion of our Saviour, to practiſe all the Duties thereof, and particularly, to exerciſe Works of Charity with Pleaſure and Perſeverance. God grant us Grace to do ſo. *Amen.*

CHAP. XI.

THESE are the Contents of this Chapter. I. *John* the Baptiſt having ſent two of his Diſciples to *Jeſus Chriſt*, to know of him whether He were the Meſſiah, our Lord ſhews that He was ſo, by working Miracles before them. II. He ſpeaks of the Nature and Excellence of the Office of *John* the Baptiſt. III. He complains of the Hardneſs of the *Jews*, who had not benefitted either by the Miniſtry of

John

John the Baptist, or by his; and He threatens the Cities of *Galilee*, where He had preach'd and done Miracles without any Effect. IV. He praises God that such as were of a meek and lowly Spirit did receive his Doctrine, whilst those who past in the World for the Wisest and most Knowing, rejected the same; and He invites all those that were weary and heavy Laden to come unto Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TO make the best Use of the Reading of this Chapter, we must observe, I. That if *John* the Baptist sent to enquire of our Lord whether He was the Messiah, it was not that he doubted thereof, but to the end his Disciples might be likewise convinc'd. II. That *Jesus Christ* would not tell them plainly that He was the Messiah, but contented Himself to prove by Miracles that He was so, and to warn them not to be offended if He appear'd in a very mean Condition. III. 'Twas with the same Design that He made those who heard Him take notice, that when they went to *John* the Baptist in the Wilderness, it was not to see a Reed shaken with the Wind; meaning that they went not upon an Occasion of very little Importance, or to see a very inconsiderable Person; neither was it a Man that was to appear with Pomp and Splendour, like those we meet with in Kings Palaces; but that they had seen in the Person of *John* the Baptist, a great Prophet, and even the greatest of Prophets, since he was the Forerunner of the Messiah; and that nevertheless People oppos'd him, and the Kingdom of God which he preached, ever since he began to appear. Christ told them all this, to shew that his Kingdom

was

was not of this World, and that they ought not to be ſurpriz'd if He himſelf appear'd in ſo low and abject a Condition, and even tho' He were rejected. IV. The Complaints that our Lord made againſt the *Jews*, who had not benefitted, either by the Preaching of *John* the Baptiſt or of Himſelf, objecting that the Life of the former was too ſtrict, and that of the latter, not enough ſo, ought to convince us, that nothing can ſatisfie unbelieving or vicious Men, who reject all the ſeveral Means that God uſes to gain them, and take occaſion even from thence to harden themſelves yet the more. V. The Threatnings which our Lord denounced againſt thoſe Cities where He had work'd Miracles, but which did not repent, is a Warning to us, that thoſe People to whom God ſhews the greateſt Kindneſs, and who do not grow better by the Preaching of the Goſpel, ſhall be puniſh'd much more ſeverely than others. VI. The Thanks which Chriſt returned to God, becauſe the Poor and Ignorant had receiv'd his Doctrine, whilſt at the ſame time it was rejected by the Great and Wiſe Men of the World, teach us, that we can't receive the Goſpel, but with an upright, humble, and ſimple Heart, nor without renouncing worldly Glory, and falſe Wiſdom. *Laſtly*, Since this charitable Saviour does with ſo much Tenderneſs call to Him all ſuch as Labour and are heavy Laden, and ſince He aſſures us, that his *Yoke is eaſie, and his Burthen light*, let us draw near to Him with an humble and lively Senſe of our own Miſery, and with a burning Deſire of being deliver'd from it; let us chearfully ſubmit to his Doctrine and Divine Precepts; let us be meek and lowly of Heart as He was, and then we ſhall find in Him Peace of Mind, and perfect Happineſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII. 1,——20.

THIS contains three Things. I. The Action of our Saviour's Diſciples, who pluck'd the Ears of Corn upon a Sabbath-Day, and what Chriſt ſaid in their Juſtification. II. The Healing of a Man who had a wither'd Hand, and the manner in which our Lord confounded the Phariſees, who were offended at his having wrought that Miracle upon the Sabbath-Day. III. The Prohibition made to the People by our Lord, to publiſh his Miracles; whereupon St. *Matthew* quotes a Prophecy from *Iſaiah*, deſcribing the Prudence, Humility, and Meekneſs that ſhould appear in the Manner in which the Meſſiah was to exerciſe his Miniſtry.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THERE are three Reflexions to be made upon this firſt Part of the xii*th* Chapter of St. *Matthew*. I. The firſt relates to the Malice and Hypocriſie of the *Phariſees*, who found fault with the Diſciples of Chriſt for plucking off the Ears of Corn upon a Sabbath-Day, and becauſe their Maſter had healed a Man with a wither'd Hand upon the like Day. In this, we ſee the Character of wicked Men and Hypocrites, and thoſe that have nothing but a falſe Zeal, namely, that they are ſcandaliz'd at innocent Matters, and even ſometimes at ſuch as are good, neceſſary, and acceptable to God, whilſt they themſelves neglect the moſt eſſential Duties of Religion, and eſpecially that of Charity. II. We ought to take very ſerious Notice of what our Lord ſays upon this Occaſion, and chiefly theſe Words, *I will have Mercy, and*

not

not Sacrifice: Let us learn from thence, that Religion does not barely conſiſt in external Matters, and in the Obſervation of Ceremonies; that indeed thoſe Things muſt not be deſpiſed or neglected, and that they have their uſe when practiſed, agreeably to the Intention of God, who has eſtabliſh'd them; but what God requires preferably to all other Matters is, that we ſhould obey his Commandments, that we ſhould exerciſe true Charity and Works of Mercy. III. The third Reflexion may be made upon the Behaviour of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who forbid his Miracles ſhould be publiſh'd, and upon theſe Words of *Iſaiah*: *He will not quench the ſmoaking Flax, nor bruiſe the broken Reed.* Here we ſee the great Prudence of our Lord, who avoided every thing that look'd like Pomp or Oſtentation; as likewiſe his Humility, Meekneſs, and Condeſcenſion. We obſerve particularly, that He diſcourages no Body, that He bears with the Weakneſs of Men with great Patience and Goodneſs; and that while there is any good in us, He don't forſake us. This ought on one hand to encourage and make us confide in Him, and on the other, induce us to imitate Him, and to be Humble, Meek and Peaceful as He was; to fly Vanity and Vainglory, and not to hunt after Praiſe; to avoid Quarrels and Diſputes; to exerciſe great Forbearance towards Men; to make Allowance for, and condeſcend to their Weakneſſes. Thus we ſhall be like *JESUS CHRIST*, and ſhew that we are his Diſciples.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII. 21, ——50.

CHRIST does *Three* Things here. I. He cures a Demoniack; and as the *Phariſees* attributed that Miracle to the Power of the Devil, our Lord ſhews the Malice and Falſhood of that Accuſation, by ſaying, that the Devil did not deſtroy his own Kingdom, and that He, *Chriſt*, could not drive away evil Spirits, if He had not a greater Power than theirs; He threaten'd the *Phariſees* that their Blaſphemies ſhould never be pardon'd, and that their impious Diſcourſe was a Proof of the extream Wickedneſs of their Heart. II. Being deſir'd by the *Phariſees* to ſhew them a Sign, He refus'd to do it, referring them to the Reſurrection, which was to be the laſt and ſtrongeſt Proof of what He was; and He laments the Unbelief of the *Jews*, mentioning upon that Account the Example of the *Ninevites*, that of the Queen of *Sheba*, and a Parable. III. He declares that his true Diſciples were as dear to Him as his neareſt Relations.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE here find, I. That the *Phariſees* attributed the Miracles of *Jeſus Chriſt* to the Power of the Devil, and that our Lord obſerving their deſperate Wickedneſs, aſſur'd them, that that Blaſphemy ſhould not be forgiven them. We may ſee by this Inſtance, what Men are capable of when blinded by their Prejudices, and tranſported by their Paſſions, and how they reſiſt the ſtrongeſt Means that God uſes to overcome their obdurateneſs. If we have a juſt Horror for ſuch Blaſphemies of the *Phariſees*, and the terrible Puniſhment our Lord denounces

nounces against them, let us take care not to imitate them, either by impious and prophane Language against God and Piety, or by resisting the Truth when it is made manifest to us: Or, *lastly*, the Operation of the Holy Ghost when we perceive it within us. And since Christ has declared, that good Discourses are the Signs of a good Heart, that wicked Discourses proceed from a corrupt Heart, and that Men must give an Account of all the evil Words they have spoken, let us learn from thence, that an honest Man is known by his Words, and that the Means of regulating them is, to sanctifie our Hearts. II. Upon the *Pharisees* desiring Christ to give them a Sign, after so many Miracles that He had already wrought in their Sight, we may observe, that Unbelievers, and those who have a wicked Heart, are never satisfy'd, and that nothing is clear or strong enough for their Conviction. And our Lord's refusing to give them such a Sign, shews us: That when God has done all that's necessary to overcome the Hardness of Mens Hearts, if they don't make a right Use thereof, He gives them up to their own obstinate Temper. III. If the Example of the Queen of *Sheba*, and that of the *Ninevites*, condemned the unbelieving *Jews*, they will condemn us much more if we don't repent, since God has been more kind to us than He was to them. The Comparison of the evil Spirit which enters again into a Man after it was gone out, and by which our Lord shew'd what was to happen to the *Jews* that rejected Him, is a Warning to us, that those upon whom God hath bestow'd his Grace, and that make an ill Use thereof, shall be depriv'd of the same, shall fall into a greater Degree of Hardness, and into greater Condemnation also. IV. The Declaration

which our Saviour made, that thoſe who do the Will of God, were as dear to Him as his Mother and Brethren, teaches us, that Holineſs, and the Obſervation of God's Commandments, is the true Mark of the Diſciples of *Jeſus*, and is what admits us into a Share of his Love; that ſo we ought to apply our ſelves above all Things to hear his Word, and to keep it. This likewiſe ſhews us, that thoſe who love God, and fear Him, are the People to whom we ought chiefly to devote our Love and Eſteem.

CHAP. XIII. 1,—23.

OUR Lord propoſes the Parable of the Seed, and afterwards explains it in Private to his Diſciples.

Reflexions after the Reading.

HERE we ſee the Parable of the Seed, and our Saviour's Explanation thereof. The Deſign of *Jeſus Chriſt* in this Parable is, to teach his Diſciples how the Word of God is received by thoſe to whom it is declar'd; He ſpeaks of *Four* Kinds of Perſons: I. The *Firſt*, are thoſe upon whom his Word makes no Impreſſion, and whoſe Heart is entirely harden'd; this is repreſented by the Seed falling on the Way ſide. II. The *Second*, are thoſe that receive the Word of God, and reliſh it, but afterwards forſake the Truth and Holineſs, as ſoon as they are expoſed to Perſecution, or ſome other Tryal: Chriſt repreſents the State of ſuch People, by the Seed falling among the Rocks, which indeed may ſpring up, but having no Root, withers away preſently. III. The *Third* Sort, are the Hearers in whom this Word

is

is render'd uſeleſs by the Love of Riches and Pleaſures, and by the Cares of this Life, after the ſame Manner as Seed falling among Thorns, where it will be choak'd and ſtifled. IV. The *laſt*, are thoſe who receive it with a good Heart, in which it produces its Fruit, and its Effect, which is Perſeverance to the End; and this is figurated by Seed ſown in good Ground, where it brings forth Fruit in abundance. Let us Chriſtians acknowledge, as our Saviour there exhorts us, how happy we are to hear theſe Things, to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God, and to be more enlighten'd than all the ancient Prophets. Let us make uſe, as we are bound to do, of theſe Advantages, and of our Light, leaſt God ſhould deprive us thereof, and leaſt we ſhould fall into Sin, and into the Condemnation of thoſe who ſee and hear, but will not receive nor underſtand the Truth, and refuſe to be converted. Let us avoid the Obdurateneſs of thoſe Hearers, upon whom the Word of God makes no Impreſſion, as well as the Inconſtancy of others who are affected therewith, but do not perſevere. Let us baniſh from our Hearts the Cares of this Life, the Love of Pleaſures and of worldly Goods, which, like Thorns, choak the good Seed; and let us be of the Number of thoſe pious Hearers, who do not only hearken to the Word of God, but keep it, and bring forth the Fruits thereof abundantly, and with perſeverance, by all Kinds of good Works, to the Glory of God, and to their own Salvation. The Lord grant us all this Grace. *Amen.*

CHAP. XIII. 24,——43.

CHRIST propoſes three Parables here: I. That of the Tares. II. That of the Grain of Muſtard-Seed. And, III. That of the Leaven.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Parable of the Tares ſignifies, according to the Explanation our Saviour himſelf gives thereof, that among thoſe who ſhould embrace the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, there would be many Hypocrites, and that the Wicked would be mixed with the Good till the End of the World; but that then they ſhall be ſeparated from each other; that the Wicked ſhall be condemned to everlaſting Torments, and the Righteous receiv'd to heavenly Glory. The Uſe therefore we are to make of this Parable is, I. *Firſt*, Not to be moved nor offended, if we ſee among Chriſtians ſome that fall into Vice and Error. *Secondly*, To ſtand upon our Guard, to avoid the Company of wicked Men, leaſt we be ſeduced by them; but nevertheleſs, to think always charitably of them; to do our utmoſt Endeavours to recover them from their Hardneſs; and as to our ſelves, to labour to be of the Number of the Righteous, that at Chriſt's ſecond Coming, we may be admitted into his Kingdom. II. By the Similitude of the Muſtard-Seed, and, III. by that of Leaven, the Deſign of our Lord was to ſhew, that though the Number of his Diſciples was then but very ſmall, and his Doctrine ſcarce known in the World, yet it ſhould be ſoon ſpread over the whole Earth. Chriſt foretold this in myſtical and hidden Expreſſions, not thinking fit

fit at that time to declare openly, for fear of ſcandalizing the *Jews*, that the *Gentiles* and all Nations ſhould come into the Church; and this is the Reaſon why he ſo often made uſe of Parables. Thus theſe Compariſons are Prophetical, of which we Chriſtians have ſeen the Meaning and the Truth, foraſmuch as the Doctrine of *Jeſus Chriſt* has been preach'd and receiv'd in ſo many Parts of the World, as He foretold it ſhould, which is likewiſe a ſtrong Proof of the Divinity of the Goſpel. Let us give Thanks to God that this heavenly Doctrine has been extended even to us, and let us beſeech Him, that He would more and more eſtabliſh his Kingdom among us, by ſanctifying his Church; and that He would call to the Knowledge thereof, thoſe People who are depriv'd of it, or who have never embrac'd it, to the end, that the whole Earth may be full of his Knowledge and of his Glory, and that the Name of God our Father may be glorified in all Places, through *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord. *Amen.*

CHAP. XIII. 44,——58.

OUR Lord propoſes to his Diſciples the Similitude of ſome hidden Treaſures, that of the Pearl, and of the Net. He exhorts them afterwards to make a right Uſe of his Inſtructions; then He goes to *Nazareth*, where few People believed on Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Compariſons of the hidden Treaſure, and that of the Pearl, tend to convince us, that there is nothing more Precious, nor more Excellent, than the Goſpel, and the Advantages that attend it; that the greateſt Happineſs

which can befal us is, to be poſſeſs'd of thoſe Advantages, and therefore that we ought to do every thing towards procuring them with Joy and Earneſtneſs, and even to renounce all that is deareſt to us in this World, to acquire ſuch a precious Treaſure. The Parable of the Net catching all kind of Things, tends to the ſame purpoſe as that of the Tares, which has been already explain'd; 'tis to denote, that all thoſe who live in the Church are not true Members of it; that there are many Hypocrites among them; but that at the End of the World, the Angels will ſeparate the Righteous from the Wicked; let us have this great and final Separation always before our Eyes, that it may induce us to depart from Evil, and to ſanctifie our Selves; let us carefully retain theſe Divine Inſtructions of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; let us keep them in our Heart as in a Cheſt, to the End that we may continually fetch from thence the neceſſary Supplies and Encouragements to reſiſt the Temptations that ſurround us, and to excite us to the Love of God, and the Practice of good Works: We may have obſerv'd at the End of this Chapter, that the Inhabitants of *Nazareth* believed not on *Jeſus Chriſt*, though they heard his Doctrine, and ſaw ſome of his Miracles, becauſe they look'd upon him as the Son of a Carpenter, and becauſe He was bred among them, which made our Lord tell them, that no Prophet was receiv'd in his own Country. Let us make a better Uſe than thoſe People did of Chriſt's Inſtructions; let us not deſpiſe the Word of God, nor the Miniſtry of his true Servants, upon pretence that theſe Benefits are common and ordinary, and that we enjoy them without difficulty, leaſt God ſhould deprive us of them for our Ingratitude, as it happen'd to thoſe of *Nazareth*,

zareth, amongſt whom our Saviour could not work many Miracles by reaſon of their Unbelief.

CHAP. XIV.

ST. *Matthew* relates *three* Things. I. The Hiſtory of the Death of *John* the Baptiſt. II. How Chriſt fed *Five Thouſand* Perſons with five Loaves and two Fiſhes. III. Another Miracle perform'd by our Lord, when, his Diſciples being expos'd to a Storm, He came to them walking upon the Sea.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE may make this general Reflexion upon the Death of *John* the Baptiſt, namely, that God was pleaſed to ſuffer that this holy Man, who had preach'd the Coming of the Kingdom of God, ſhould die by a violent Death, to convince the *Jews*, that his Kingdom was not to be a Temporal one; and that they might not be offended when Chriſt himſelf ſhould be put to Death. It may be obſerv'd in the next Place, that the Cauſe of *John* the Baptiſt's Death was, the Zeal that that Prophet ſhewed in reproving *Herod* for his criminal Correſpondence with *Herodias*; the Hatred which that immodeſt Woman had conceiv'd againſt *John* on the ſame Account, and the Complacency that *Herod* had for her. The Reflexions that are to be made upon all this are, That the Servants of God ought to rebuke all ſorts of Perſons with Courage and Zeal, tho' they often draw upon themſelves thereby the Hatred of wicked Men; that Impurity, and the Love of Pleaſures, make People commit many Sins: And, *Laſtly*, that great Evils may reſult from

raſh Oaths, as well as from the unſeaſonable and evil Shame, and the Complacence that we have for vicious People. II. The Miracle of the five Loaves has this particularity in it, that it was wrought in the Preſence of ſeveral Thouſands of Men, who were Witneſſes, and ſhar'd in the Benefit of it; which renders this Miracle yet more certain, and proves the wonderful Power of our Lord, as well as his Goodneſs towards the People that followed him. III. *Laſtly*, The other Miracle that Chriſt did, when He went to his Diſciples, walking upon the Sea, and caus'd St. *Peter* to walk upon it likewiſe, is another Proof of his unlimited Power, and of his Love to his Diſciples, and eſpecially to this Apoſtle; whereupon we are to conſider, that if God permits us to be expoſed to ſeveral Dangers, He does alſo come ſeaſonably to our Aſſiſtance; and that as the Zeal and Faith of St. *Peter* enabled him at firſt to walk upon the Water, into which he ſunk afterwards, through fear; ſo it is the Want of Faith only, that makes us yield to Temptations and Dangers, but that we may happily ſurmount the ſame by Faith, and the Aſſiſtance of the Lord.

CHAP. XV. 1,——20.

I. CHRIST juſtifies his Diſciples for not obſerving the Traditions and Cuſtoms of the *Jews*; and He convinces the *Phariſees*, who were offended at it, that they themſelves violate the Divine Law by their Traditions, in Teaching that if any one devoted to God ſuch a Part of his Eſtate, wherewith he might have relieved his Father or Mother, it was not lawful for him, after ſuch a Vow, to apply it to ſuch Aſſiſtance. II. In the next Place, our Lord ſhews what it

it is that defiles a Man, and what does not defile him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Discourse between *Christ* and the *Pharisees*, furnishes us with the following Instructions: I. That Hypocrites make Religion and Piety to consist only in external Duties, and oftentimes in such as are vain and of very small Weight; that they scrupulously observe these kinds of Things, and condemn those that don't observe them, whilst they themselves violate the most important Duties, and the most positive Commands of God. II. That the Duty of Children to their Parents is altogether inviolable, that nothing can dispense therewith, and that they are particularly oblig'd to assist them in Time of Need. III. That Vows and Oaths which are rash, and contrary to the Divine Law, ought not to be kept. IV. That God rejects the Worship of those who only honour Him with their Mouths and Lips, but whose Hearts are far from Him; and that He will be served according as He has commanded in his Word, and not according to the Inventions and Directions of Men. V. The last Instruction which our Lord gives us is very important, and of great Use: Namely, That it is not only the external Actions which defile Men, and render them guilty before God, but that it is likewise and chiefly the wicked Thoughts and Motions of the Heart, and Desires tending to Impurity, to Unrighteousness, to Pride, to Slander, and other Sins. This is a Doctrine which we must never forget, and which obliges us more particularly to study the internal Sanctification and Purity of the Heart and Conscience.

CHAP. XV. 21,——39.

I. OUR Lord heals the Daughter of a *Canaanitiſh* Woman: And, II. Feeds *Four Thouſand* Men with ſeven Loaves and a few Fiſhes.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE ought to give a particular Attention to the Miracle which Chriſt wrought by healing the Daughter of the *Canaanite*; He deny'd at firſt to cure her, becauſe her Mother was a *Gentile*; his Reaſons for doing ſo, were not only thereby to excite the Zeal of that Woman, but likewiſe becauſe the Time was not yet come in which the *Gentiles* were to be called; and becauſe that during his Stay upon Earth, He was only ſent to the *Jews*. But ſeeing her Perſeverance and great Humility, He did at laſt what ſhe deſired of him. By this Example we may obſerve, that Prayers made with Faith, Humility, and Perſeverance, are very acceptable to God, and very powerful; that if God does not hear us at firſt, it is to try us, to encourage our Zeal, and to render us more ſenſible of our own Unworthineſs; but that if we continue to call upon Him fervently, He grants us at laſt thoſe Favours we beg of Him. II. *Laſtly*, This Miracle, as well as a great Number more which our Lord wrought in Healing the Sick, in Feeding *Four Thouſand* Men with ſeven Loaves and a few Fiſhes, and the like, ſhould make us acknowledge the infinite Power of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and his exceeding great Charity towards Men; and ought to excite us to praiſe God at the Hearing of ſo many Won-

Wonders, and to glorifie Him, as thoſe who were Eye-Witneſſes of them did formerly.

CHAP. XVI.

THIS Chapter has four Parts: I. Chriſt refuſes to ſhew a Sign, which the *Phariſees* deſired of Him, and reproaches them for their Blindneſs. II. He warns his Diſciples to take heed of the Leaven of the *Phariſees.* III. Having ask'd the Apoſtles their Opinion concerning Him, St. *Peter* confeſſes that He was the Chriſt, the Son of the Living God; whereupon our Lord makes him very gracious Promiſes. IV. He foretels his own Death; He exhorts his Diſciples to prepare for Sufferings; and to engage them thereto, He ſhews them the Importance of the Salvation or Loſs of the Soul. He likewiſe foretels that there was one among his Apoſtles that ſhould not die till his Kingdom was eſtabliſh'd, and till the Deſtruction of the *Jews*, which was accompliſhed in St. *John.*

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt Reflexion that we ought to make here, relates to the Blindneſs of the *Phariſees*, who, notwithſtanding that Chriſt had done ſo many Miracles, and that they might perceive from thence, that the Time of the *Meſſiah*'s Coming was fulfilled, were ſtill urgent with our Lord to ſhew them a Sign, which He very juſtly refuſed to do. This may convince us, that after God has given ſufficient Proofs of the Truth of the Goſpel, if Men do not ſubmit to it, they muſt not expect that God will do more to overcome their Unbelief. II. The Warning that Chriſt gave his Diſciples to beware of the Doctrine of the *Phariſees*, who

ſtuck

ſtuck to the outſide of Religion, and to Traditions; and alſo the Doctrine of the *Sadducees*, who deny'd the Reſurrection, and the Immortality of the Soul, is a Leſſon to us, to avoid with great Care Superſtition and Hypocriſie, as well as impious and libertine Opinions. III. The Confeſſion that St. *Peter* made, that *our Lord was the Chriſt, the Son of the Living God*, teaches us, that this is the great and Fundamental Truth which ought to be believed and confeſſed by Chriſtians before the whole World. IV. The Promiſe that Chriſt made to that Apoſtle, when He ſaid to him, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build the Church, and I will give thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, ſignifies, that St. *Peter* would be one of the principal Miniſters uſed by him in the Eſtabliſhment of his Church; and that it would be he, who ſhould firſt preach the Goſpel both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*. V. When we ſee Chriſt foretelling his Death, and ſeverely rebuking St. *Peter*, who (being full of the Prejudices of the *Jews*) could not be perſuaded that the *Meſſiah* was to die, we muſt conſider that our Lord proceded in that manner more plainly to convince his Diſciples that it was neceſſary He ſhould ſuffer Death, and to ſhew them He was reſolved to do it. VI. The laſt Verſes of this Chapter furniſh us with ſeveral Inſtructions of great Moment, and particularly theſe three; That the firſt Thing Chriſt requires of his Diſciples is, to renounce themſelves, and to be prepared for Sufferings; and that the Deſire of Preſerving our Lives ſhould never hinder us from following and obeying him; That the Salvation and Loſs of the Soul is the moſt important Thing imaginable; and that it is of no Advantage to gain the whole World, if a Man loſes his own Soul. And, *Laſtly*, That the

Son

Son of God will come with Glory from Heaven, to render to us all according to our Works.

CHAP. XVII.

THIS Chapter contains, I. The Hiſtory of the Transfiguration of *Jeſus Chriſt*. II. The Diſcourſe He had with his Apoſtles about the Coming of *Elias*, whom the *Jews* expected. III. The Cure of a Demoniack, whom the Apoſtles could not drive out. IV. A Miracle wrought by Chriſt for the Payment of the Tribute Money, given by the *Jews* for the Maintenance of the Temple and Divine Service.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. OUR Lord was pleaſed to be transformed a little before his Death in the Preſence of three of his Apoſtles, and to ſhew them his Glory, to ſtrengthen their Faith, and to fortifie them againſt the Scandal which his Death might give them. The Coming of *Moſes* and *Elias*, who appeared at that Time, ſhews, that Chriſt was He whoſe Coming the Prophets had foretold, and that He was greater than the moſt Excellent of the Prophets. It proves alſo, that theſe holy Men were not annihilated, and that therefore there is another Life reſerved for good Men after this. And the Voice which God cauſed to be heard from Heaven, engages us to look upon *Jeſus Chriſt* as the Son of God, and to hear and obey none other but Him. II. What Chriſt ſaid to his Diſciples, that *John* the Baptiſt was that *Elias*, whoſe Coming the Prophets had foretold, ſhould convince us of the Dignity of the Perſon of *John* the Baptiſt, and of the Authority of his

his Miniſtry. III. In the Hiſtory of the Demoniack, whom the Apoſtles could not cure, we find that Chriſt was inveſted with a Power which nothing could reſiſt, and that He was at the ſame Time full of Compaſſion towards the Miſerable. We likewiſe ſee, that the Want of Faith in the Apoſtles, was the Cauſe they could not work this Miracle; and, on the contrary, the Father of that poor Creature did by his Faith obtain the Cure of his Son. This ſhews us, how neceſſary and how efficacious Faith is, and how great Reaſon we have to endeavour to be ſtrengthen'd therein, ſince it is not leſs neceſſary now for our Salvation, than it was formerly for Miracles. The Concern which the Apoſtles ſhew'd when Chriſt foretold his Death, is another Proof of the Weakneſs of their Faith; but as for us, who know that Chriſt died that He might obtain for us Everlaſting Life, we ought to conſider his Death, as the Foundation of our Hopes and Happineſs. IV. *Laſtly*, The miraculous Manner in which our Lord paid the Tribute, is a remarkable Effect of his Power; He was alſo pleaſed to ſhew thereby that He did not deſpiſe the Things that concerned Religion; and it is an Example for us to ſubmit to publick Rule, and to give without grudging what we are bound to contribute; eſpecially when the Service of God and Works of Piety are in the Caſe.

CHAP. XVIII. 1,——14.

THE Apoſtles ask our Lord which of them ſhould be the greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven. They put this Queſtion to Him, becauſe they were of the ſame Opinion with the *Jews*, that the Kingdom of the Meſſiah would be

be Eſtabliſh'd upon the Earth, and that there would be great Offices and Places to be obtain'd in this Kingdom. Our Lord, to undeceive them, places a little Child in the midſt of them, and exhorts them to become like little Children: He adviſes them not to deſpiſe, nor to be offended at ſuch as believe in Him, though they are very mean as to this World, and for this Reaſon repreſents to them, that it is a great Sin to give Scandal to any of the Faithful. That God protects them by his Angels, and that He calls even the greateſt Sinners to Repentance and Salvation. All this Diſcourſe of *Jeſus Chriſt* tends to deliver the Apoſtles from thoſe Prejudices under which they labour'd, with reſpect to the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, and to inſpire them with Sentiments of Charity and Humility.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Saviour of the World teaches us here, I. That the Kingdom which He came to Eſtabliſh, is a ſpiritual and heavenly Kingdom; and that to enter into it, we muſt be extremely Humble, and ſet our Hearts no more upon the Glories and Honours of this World, than little Children do. II. That we ought to have a very high Value for the true Diſciples of Chriſt, tho' they ſhould be but low and mean among Men; that good People are moſt dear to God, ſince He cauſes his holy Angels to watch over them, and that therefore we ought to honour and aſſiſt them; that it is a very great Sin to deſpiſe or offend them, and that God will ſeverely revenge that Sin. Theſe Conſiderations ſhould likewiſe encourage the Faithful, and inſpire them with great Confidence. III. What Chriſt ſays about Offences, ſhews

ſhews us, that we ought not to be ſurpriz'd if they happen; that God is not the Cauſe of them; that they do not come but through the Fault of Men; and that He will puniſh thoſe who are the Occaſion of them: It likewiſe follows from thence, that we ought to avoid Sin and Scandal with the utmoſt Care; and that we may do it by following the Council which our Lord lays down, and eſpecially by avoiding every Thing that may be a ſtumbling Block to our ſelves or others. *Laſtly*, What our Lord ſays here, that God does not deſire that even the Meaneſt ſhould periſh, and that there is Joy in Heaven over one repenting Sinner, ſhews, that it is not lawful to deſpiſe any Body; but, on the contrary, that we ought to procure the Edification of all Men as far as in us lies; to labour for the Converſion of Sinners; to rejoice when they repent; and to make a right Uſe our ſelves of the Patience and Mercy of the Lord.

CHAP. XVIII. 15,——35.

THIS Portion of Scripture conſiſts of two Parts: I. Chriſt teaches his Diſciples after what manner they ought to behave towards their Brethren that offend them, and how they ought to tell them of their Fault, both privately and by the Means of the Church. II. He ſhews by a Parable, the Obligation we lie under to pardon one another, and what they have to expect that are of an unforgiving Temper.

Reflexions after the Reading.

CHRIST teaches us here, I. That we are obliged to pardon each other, and to labour for Peace by all poſſible Means. II. He eſtabliſhes the Authority and Diſcipline of the Church, and the Neceſſity of Warnings and Reproofs, both private and publick; He ſhews, that all the Members of a Church ought to ſubmit themſelves to the Diſcipline eſtabliſh'd therein, and that ſuch as refuſe to hearken to the Voice of the Church, and deſpiſe its Warnings, ought to be look'd upon as Heathens and Publicans; that is to ſay, they ſhould not be any longer accounted Members of the Church, but be cut off from its Communion; He declares that God ratifies and confirms in Heaven what the Church does here below agreeably to his Intentions. III. The Promiſe that our Lord makes, to hear thoſe that ſhould join together to ask any thing; and of being preſent in the midſt of thoſe that ſhould be gathered together in his Name, teaches us, that the Prayers that are offered up in the Spirit of Unity and Charity, are very acceptable to God, as well as thoſe Congregations that are form'd to ſerve and call upon Him. IV. Chriſt inſtructs us about the Nature and Neceſſity of Forgiveneſs. He explains the Nature of it, by ſaying, that a Man ought to pardon even ſeven times ſeventy Faults, which denotes, that Forgiveneſs ought to be general and unlimited, and that we ſhould be diſpoſed to pardon all Kinds of Perſons, and all ſorts of Offences, even ſuch as are continued and repeated, and that at all Times, without ever being diſcourag'd. He ſhews the Neceſſity of ſuch Forgiveneſs, by the Parable of the Servant, to whom his Maſter had remitted a very

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conſiderable Debt; but who would not pardon a very ſmall one of his Fellow Servant's. This Parable ſets *Three* Things before our Eyes: *Firſt*, The infinite Goodneſs of God, who vouchſafes to pardon us his Servants and his Creatures, though our Sins are very great and very numerous. *Secondly*, The Crime of Ingratitude in thoſe who refuſe to pardon Men who are their Equals, and whoſe Offences are very Light in compariſon with the Sins we commit againſt God. *Thirdly*, The juſt and terrible Puniſhment of all thoſe who do not pardon heartily and univerſally the Offences and Injuries they have receiv'd from every Body.

CHAP. XIX. 1,——15.

THE *Phariſees* having ask'd our Lord, whether it was lawful for Husbands to put away their Wives, as was the Practice of the *Jews*; He anſwers them, that Divorces were contrary to the firſt Inſtitution of Marriage, and that they ought not to prevail any longer; and upon this Occaſion tells his Diſciples, inquiring of Him about the State of Matrimony, that there ſhould be ſome People who would entirely renounce it for the ſake of the Goſpel: After this, He bleſſes little Children that were brought to him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT our Saviour ſays at the Beginning of this Chapter with reſpect to Matrimony, and the Divorces that were in Uſe among the *Jews*, teaches us in general, that many things which had been tollerated till that Time, by reaſon of the Condition of that People, and of their hard and carnal Temper, would not be allowed

allowed among Chriſtians, becauſe God has given them greater Light, and called them to a higher Degree of Holineſs. We learn from hence particularly, that by the Divine Inſtitution, a Man and a Woman are inſeparably united by the Laws of Matrimony; that thoſe Laws ought to be inviolably obſerved, and that nothing but Adultery can juſtifie a Divorce, nor afford a Liberty of Marrying again. Chriſt ſhews us beſides, that the Goſpel calls us to great Chaſtity, and even that there would be Chriſtians that would abſolutely renounce Marriage, in order to ſerve God with more freedom, and with greater Zeal to work out their own Salvation, and the Advancement of the Goſpel. The Bleſſing that our Lord gave to little Children, which were preſented to Him, ſhews us, that ſuch Children are near to Him, and that He is diſpoſed to receive and bleſs them; from whence we may infer, that the Devoting them to Him by Prayer and Baptiſm, is very agreeable to his Will; He would likewiſe teach us thereby, that we muſt be like little Children in Simplicity, Innocence, and Meekneſs, if we would enter into the Kingdom of God.

CHAP. XIX. 16, ——30.

A Rich young Man having enquired of our Lord what he ſhould do to be ſaved, was anſwered, that He muſt give away all that He had. Chriſt ſaid ſo to Him, that it might appear whether he was inclined to follow Him; becauſe, at that time, his Diſciples were obliged, for the moſt part, to leave their worldly Goods, and determine themſelves to undergo Poverty, Baniſhment, and Perſecution. Chriſt finding the young Man diſcouraged by ſuch an Anſwer, declared upon this Occaſion, that the Attachment to, and Love of Riches, would hin-

der the Salvation of many People; and as his Apoſtles had renounced every thing to follow Him, He promiſed them they ſhould ſit upon Twelve Thrones, to Judge the Twelve Tribes of *Iſrael*; the Meaning of which is, that they ſhould be exalted to a very great Degree of Glory when his Kingdom was Eſtabliſh'd, and that they ſhould poſſeſs a very conſiderable Rank in the Church. He promiſes likewiſe abundantly to reward, even in this Life, ſuch as forſake all for the Goſpel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Diſcourſe our Lord held with the Rich young Man mention'd in this Chapter, teaches us: I. That to enter into Life everlaſting, we muſt keep the Commandments of God. II. That we ought to be diſpoſed to forſake our Eſtates, and all that we poſſeſs in this World, when God calls us to it, and when we cannot keep them without being wanting in our Duty towards Him. III. The Concern which this young Man diſcovered at the Hearing of what Chriſt ſaid to Him, and the Declaration of our Saviour, that there would be but few rich Men that could reſolve to forſake their Goods to come into the Church, ſhews, that Riches do commonly unite our Hearts to the World, and that the Enjoyment of them is always dangerous. IV. Chriſt has taught us, that ſuch a Renunciation of worldly Goods is not an impoſſible Thing; but, on the contrary, both practicable, and even eaſie and agreeable too, when we are enlighten'd by Faith, and aſſiſted by the Spirit of God. Let us ſeriouſly reflect upon theſe Inſtructions; let us take heed that the good Things of this Life do not hinder our Salvation, and if we be not called to

abandon

abandon them, as were the Apoſtles formerly, let us not ſet our Heart upon them; let us poſſeſs them without abuſing them; let us employ them in Works of Piety and Charity. By this means we ſhall procure to our ſelves a Treaſure in Heauen, and Share in the Bleſſings with which our Lord has promiſed to reward, both in this World and the next, ſuch as ſhall have fulfilled all theſe Duties. May He himſelf grant us this Grace! *Amen.*

CHAP. XX. 1,——16.

THE firſt Part of this Chapter contains the Parable of the Labourers, who going to Work in the Vineyard at different Hours of the Day, did all of them receive the ſame Wages.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Deſign of our Lord in this Parable, was to teach his Diſciples that the glorious Rewards which He had promiſed to thoſe who ſhould forſake all for the Goſpel, and which are recited in the foregoing Chapter, did not relate to them only; but that ſeveral others, who ſhould be called after them, even from among the *Gentiles*, and that ſhould obey their Call, would partake of the ſame Rewards as thoſe that were invited firſt; and that, far from being Jealous thereat, they ought to rejoice that God did vouchſafe to impart his Mercies to a greater Number of Perſons. *Laſtly*, We muſt not make a wrong Uſe of this Parable, nor conclude from thence, that it will be ſoon enough to repent at the End of our Lives; on the contrary, we ſhould conſider, that all thoſe of whom Chriſt ſpeaks, and that

went into the Vineyard at ſeveral Hours of the Day, went thither as ſoon as they were ordered; that thoſe who did not go till the End of the Day, did not go ſooner, becauſe they were not ſooner ſent; and that this was the Reaſon why they did receive the ſame Wages as the reſt. From whence it appears, that thoſe who obey the Vocation whenſoever God is pleaſed to call them, ſhall ſave their Souls; but that thoſe whom God has called for a long while, are by no means within the Caſe: As for inſtance: We our ſelves, and eſpecially all ſuch as being called from the beginning of their Lives, and refuſe to follow their Vocation, are without excuſe. Let us thence acknowledge, that as ſoon as God calls, we are all of us obliged to labour with Faithfulneſs and Perſeverance in the Lord's Vineyard, that is to ſay, to his Glory and our own Salvation; to the end, that when we muſt yield up up our Accounts, we may receive from his free Bounty the Wages appointed to all thoſe that ſerve Him with Sincerity. Let us beſeech Him to grant this Grace to all Men. *Amen.*

CHAP. XX. 17, 18.

I. CHRIST foretels his Death and Reſurrection. II. He anſwers the Mother of *James* and *John*, who deſired that thoſe two Apoſtles might enjoy the chief Places in his Kingdom. And, III. He heals two Blind Men.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may obſerve from this part of the Chapter, that our Lord warned his Diſciples of his Death, to the end that they might

not

not be ſurpriſed when it ſhould happen; and that He gave an inſtance of his Power as well as of his Goodneſs towards the Afflicted, by reſtoring Sight to two blind Perſons; but that which is moſt remarkable here is, what Chriſt anſwered to the Mother of *James* and *John*, who imagining, as the reſt of the *Jews* did, that the Meſſiah ſhould reign upon the Earth, like the Kings of this World, claimed for her two Sons the higheſt Poſts in his Kingdom, as being of our Lord's Kindred, and choſen by Him for Apoſtles, and even diſtinguiſhed from the reſt upon ſeveral Occaſions. *Jeſus Chriſt* condemned that Requeſt, which ſhewed, that that Woman did not underſtand the Nature of his Kingdom, and which was capable of raiſing Jealouſies and Diviſions among the Apoſtles. He told them, that they ought rather to be prepar'd to drink of the ſame Cup with Him, and be baptized with his Baptiſm, that is, to ſuffer as He ſhould, and not to be exalted to Dignities and Preferments; that inſtead of looking for Places among the great ones of this World, they ought rather to be humbled and abaſed, and that this would be their Exaltation and their Glory; and that He might inſpire them with ſuch Sentiments, He referr'd them to his Example, ſaying that He was come into the World to appear like a Servant, and to ſuffer Death. Theſe Words of our Saviour are a Warning to all Chriſtians, to expel from their Hearts Pride and Ambition; not to hunt after Honour, or to be preferr'd before others; not to deſire worldly Advantages, but to live humbly, and bear our Croſs, according to the Example of the Son of God, who came into the World to ſerve,

and who lived in it with ſo great Humility, and at laſt laid down his Life to redeem us; it is thus therefore by imitating his Lowlineſs, that we ſhall attain to the Glory of his Kingdom. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXI. 1,——22.

ST. *Matthew* relates here, I. The Hiſtory of Chriſt's Royal Entry into *Jeruſalem*. II. How He drove out of the Temple thoſe that prophaned it. III. What He anſwered to the *Phariſees*, who found fault with the Acclamations of the People on his behalf. And, IV. The Miracle of the Fig-Tree.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. TO underſtand the Reaſon and Deſign of our Saviour's Royal Entry into *Jeruſalem*, we may obſerve, that He had avoided till then to appear with Pomp, and to be acknowledged publickly for the Meſſiah; but that He thought fit ſix Days before his Death to make known to the World that He was the Meſſiah foretold by the Prophets, and that He would be acknowledged for ſuch by the People that attended Him, and enter into the Temple in the midſt of the Acclamations of a great Multitude of Perſons. Nevertheleſs, He did it after a manner that by no means reſembled the Splendour of worldly Princes, but which diſcovered a great deal of Humility and Meekneſs, and which was agreeable to what *Zachariah* had Propheſied, ſaying, that the Meſſiah ſhould come, *Meek, and ſitting upon an Aſs*; whereby Chriſt condeſcended to ſhew, that his Kingdom was not of this World. Let us here acknowledge the Glory of our Redeemer, and at the ſame

ſame time his great Goodneſs; let us render Him our Homage, in Imitation of the People that followed Him to *Jeruſalem*; and ſince we know Him much better than they did, let us worſhip Him with much greater Reſpect and Reverence; let us rejoice at his Coming, and ſay: *Bleſſed be He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.* II, and III. That Action of Chriſt, in driving away thoſe that bought and ſold in and about the Temple, was an effect of his great Zeal, and tended to make the *Jews* ſenſible of his divine and heavenly Authority. From hence we may learn, not to prophane the Places in which God is worſhipped, whether it be by appearing there irreverently, or whether it be by rendring to God a Hypocritical and diſſembled Service. IV. As for the Miracle of the Fig-Tree that wither'd away, our Lord did it to ſtrnegthen the Faith of his Diſciples, at a Time when He was about to ſuffer Death, and to inſtruct them in the Virtue and Efficacy of Faith and Prayer. Thus we are taught by this Miracle, that it is through Faith and Prayer that we are to obtain from the Lord the moſt wholſome Favours.

CHAP. XXI. 23,——46.

THIS Leſſon conſiſts of three Parts: I. What Chriſt anſwered the *Phariſees*, who demanded of Him an Account of his Authority. II. The Parable of the two Sons whom their Father ſent into the Vineyard. III. The Parable of the Husbandmen, who, after having killed their Maſter's Servants, did likewiſe ſlay the Son himſelf.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may obſerve here, I. That when the *Phariſees* asked our Lord, from whence He deriv'd his Authority, He would not anſwer them directly, but was pleaſed to ſtop their Mouths by putting a Queſtion to them, what they thought of the Baptiſm of *John*; whereby He would convince them of a voluntary and malicious Ignorance, and at the ſame time make them ſenſible that his Authority proceded from God, as well as that of *John* the Baptiſt his Forerunner. As for us, by whom this Authority is perfectly underſtood, and who know that the Doctrine of *Jeſus Chriſt*, as well as that of *John* the Baptiſt, is Divine; we ought to ſubmit our ſelves thereto, leaſt the ſame Reproach ſhould be likewiſe made to us: *Why do you not then believe it*? II. The Parable of the two Sons, ſignifies, that thoſe People who were look'd upon as the moſt corrupt and vicious, had believed the Preaching of *John* the Baptiſt ſooner than the *Phariſees* and the chief Men of the *Jews*, who being in Appearance the moſt learned and the moſt holy, ought likewiſe to have been the firſt in receiving it. This Parable is applicable to Sinners, who, being touch'd with Repentance, return to their Duty; and to bad Chriſtians, who, having engag'd themſelves to ſerve God, and to obey Him, break their Promiſes, and do not anſwer to their Calling. III. The Compariſon of the Husbandmen denotes three Things. *Firſt*, The Favours that God had ſhewn the *Jews* in chooſing them for his People, and in ſending to them his Servants ſeveral Times, and at laſt his own Son. *Secondly*, The Ingratitude and Naughtineſs of the *Jews*, who, inſtead of acknowledg-

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ing theſe Favours, had rejected and perſecuted the Prophets, and crucified the Lord of Life. *Thirdly*, That God would puniſh the *Jews* by deſtroying them, by taking away his Covenant from them, and by calling the *Gentiles* in their ſtead; and that Chriſt, who had been rejected by the chiefeſt of the *Jews*, ſhould be exalted to ſupreme Glory, as it had been foretold by the Prophecy in the cxviiith Pſalm. What this Parable typified, is exactly come to paſs; the *Jews* having been deſtroyed and rejected, the Goſpel declared to the *Gentiles*, and the Kingdom of God eſtabliſh'd throughout the World. Thus God deprives both of his Favour and Goſpel ſuch as don't make a right Uſe thereof, nor produce the Fruits which He expects from them.

CHAP. XXII. 1,——22.

WHAT we are here about to read, contains, I. The Parable of the Marriage. II. What Chriſt anſwered the *Phariſees* when they asked Him, if it was lawful to pay Tribute to the Emperor.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Meaning of the Parable of the Marriage is, that the *Jews* had been firſt called to Salvation by *Jeſus Chriſt*, but they had rejected it, and for that Reaſon would be deſtroyed; that afterwards God would offer that Favour to the *Gentiles*, that the *Gentiles* would receive it, and be admitted into his Covenant, but that there would be among thoſe that came into the Church, Hypocrites, who ſhould likewiſe receive the Puniſhment of their Crime. All that our Saviour foretold by this Simi-

Similitude has been fulfilled, the Divine Vengeance having fallen upon the *Jews*, and the *Gentiles* having been called in their Room; by which we may diſcover the Divinity of the Goſpel, and the Certainty of the Promiſes contained therein. Let us learn from hence, that God is very gracious to Men when He calls them to Salvation, and that thoſe who don't take Advantage of the Invitations that God vouchſafes to make them, will not eſcape his Vengeance. Let us obſerve what was ſaid to the Man who ſat down to Table without a Wedding Garment; it denotes, that all ſuch as live in the external Communion of the Church, are not true Members of it; but that God can diſcover the Hypocrites, who mingle themſelves with Believers; and that accordingly, if we be not cloathed with a ſincere Faith and Holineſs, we ſhall not eſcape the Puniſhment due to our Hypocriſie. II. The Anſwer which Chriſt returned when He was ask'd, whether it was lawful to pay Tribute to *Ceſar*, teaches us, that our Duty to Kings and Princes, and our Duty towards God, are both indiſpenſible, and that neither of them are oppoſite to each other; but, on the contrary, they are perfectly conſiſtent and agreeing; ſo that we are bound to ſubmit our ſelves to the higher Powers, and to render them their Due, in ſuch manner, nevertheleſs, as not to forget that our Duty to God challenges the firſt Place, and that we are always obliged firſt and chiefly to diſcharge the ſame.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII. 23,—46.

CHRIST does three Things here. I. The *Sadducees*, who denied the Reſurrection of the Dead, having propoſed to Him the Caſe of a Woman that had had ſeven Husbands, and in order to enſnare Him, having ask'd which of the ſeven ſhe would belong to after the Reſurrection; our Lord anſwers them, by ſaying, that there would be no ſuch Thing as Marrying in the Life to come, and by proving from the Scriptures, that the Dead ſhould riſe again. II. He anſwers a Queſtion put to Him by a *Scribe*, about the greateſt Commandment of the Law. III. He asks the *Phariſees*, How the Meſſiah was at the ſame Time both the Son and Lord of *David*? To which they could not anſwer, and He did not think fit to explain it to them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. IN the Diſcourſe which Chriſt held with the *Sadducees* about the Reſurrection, we ought, I. To admire his Wiſdom entirely Divine, and at the ſame Time, the Strength and Evidence with which He confounds them, and proves that the Dead ſhall riſe again. Let us learn then from hence, that nothing is more certain than the Reſurrection of the Dead, and that thoſe who have been acceptable to God in their Life-Time, as the Patriarchs, are not annihilated by Death. Let us carefully retain this Doctrine, which is the Support of our Faith and of our Hopes; but we muſt likewiſe remember, that Chriſt has told us, that the Bands of Fleſh and Blood ſhall not ſubſiſt any longer in the Life to come, and that the Bleſſed will

will not be any more ſubject to the Wants of the Body, or Neceſſaries of this Life, but will be like the Angels of God. Let us ſeriouſly reflect upon this, to the end that we may labour to become ſpiritual Men, and by living in a great Degree of Holineſs, may attain at length to a happy Reſurrection. II. Let us carefully impreſs upon our Minds this other Doctrine which Chriſt has inculcated ſo plainly and poſitively, *viz.* That the Abſtract or Sum of all Religion is: *To love God with all our Heart, and our Neighbour as our Selves*; and let us thereby acknowledge, that our chief Care ought to be to fix in our Hearts this true Love of God, and of all Men. III. With reſpect to the Queſtion which Chriſt put to the *Phariſees*, how the Meſſiah could be the Son of *David*? It muſt be obſerved, that He only propoſed it to them, to make them ſenſible of their Ignorance, particularly in relation to the Perſon of the Meſſiah, and to the Nature of his Kingdom; but that He would not explain it to them, becauſe they could not comprehend nor believe what He had ſaid to them, and likewiſe becauſe it was not convenient to ſpeak openly of the Glory and Dignity of his Perſon at that Time; but this Queſtion is very plain and obvious to us, who know that *Jeſus Chriſt* was the Son of *David*, as Man; but that He is our Lord, as the Son of God, and that He is King of the World, and of the Church, which engages us to acknowledge and worſhip Him as ſuch, and place our Glory in our Obedience and Subjection to Him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII. 1,——22.

OUR Lord ſpeaks againſt the *Phariſees* and *Scribes*. He owns all that is good and lawful in their Doctrine, and in their Miniſtry, but blames them for their Hypocriſie. He tells them they affected a great Appearance of Holineſs, upon which account they made large Phylacteries, (which were Bands of Parchment, upon which they writ Sentences of the Law of *Moſes*, and which the *Jews* wore for Devotion,) but that nevertheleſs they were filled with Pride, and that their only concern was how to be honour'd; He adds, that they rejected the Goſpel, and hindered others from receiving it; He reproaches them with being Covetous and Wicked, and of making Religion and Prayer ſubſervient to their Intereſt. He takes notice that their Doctrine about Oaths, was a Proof of their Ignorance, of the little reſpect they had for the Divinity, and of their deteſtable Avarice; foraſmuch as they maintained and taught, that if a Man ſwore by the Gold, and by the Gifts that were offered in the Temple, and upon the Altar, the Obligation of his Conſcience was ſtronger, than if he had ſworn by the Altar, or by the Temple it ſelf.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IT may be obſerved upon this Chapter in general, that our Lord drawing near his Death, did, with a holy Liberty, and with an Authority entirely Divine, rebuke the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* for their Wickedneſs and Hypocriſie; it being very neceſſary that He ſhould make them known to the People for what they were.

were. The particular Reflexions that we are to make upon what has been read are, I. That it is a great Evil, when thoſe who teach others, and ought to ſet them a good Example, are Impious and Hypocritical themſelves; that nevertheleſs, when the Miniſters of Religion and Paſtors teach ſound Doctrine, but lead ill Lives, we muſt not indeed imitate their Actions, but however, hear and obey them always when they preach the Truth. II. That the Diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and particularly thoſe to whom the Care of the Church is intruſted, ought to be wholly free from Hypocriſie, Ambition, and Covetouſneſs, if they would not reſemble thoſe *Phariſees* whom our Lord curſed; that they themſelves ought to walk in the Ways of God, and cauſe others to come in alſo, by contributing with all their Might to the Converſion of Sinners, and to the Edification of all Men. III. The Cenſure which Chriſt paſſes upon the Doctrine of the *Phariſees*, and upon the Articles of Swearing, ſhews, that an Oath ought to be held in great Reverence, ſince we thereby appeal to God himſelf; that Perjury, and the Breach of Vows, is a great Sin: And, *Laſtly*, That we ought even to abſtain from all kind of vain and raſh Oaths.

CHAP. XXIII. 23,——39.

CHRIST continues to reproach the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* with their Hypocriſie. He obſerves, that it appeared, that beſides the Tythes that were preſcribed by the Law, they gave likewiſe thoſe of Herbs, and of every Thing that grew, which was more than God had commanded; but that nevertheleſs, they neglected thoſe Duties that were of much greater Importance. He adds farther, that they

they obſerved a great deal of external Purity, but as for the internal, they were very corrupt; that they adorned the Tombs of the Prophets, but at the ſame Time perſecuted the Servants of God. *Laſtly*, He declares, that they did thereby draw upon themſelves, and the whole *Jewiſh* Nation, the dreadful Judgments of God; and He laments, after a moſt tender Manner, the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* which was coming upon them, becauſe they did not lay hold of the Advantage of his Preſence and Favour.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Curſes pronounced by our Lord throughout this whole Diſcourſe againſt Hypocrites, ought to inſpire us with a ſtrong Averſion and Abhorrence of Hypocriſie, as a Sin that is very odious in all Men, but chiefly in thoſe that teach others, and that make Profeſſion of Zeal and Godlineſs. II. We may here obſerve one of thoſe Tokens whereby Hypocrites are known; it is by their affecting an outward Holineſs, by being nice and ſcrupulous in Things of little Conſequence, and by neglecting the moſt important Matters of Religion; ſuch as Faith, Obedience, and Mercy, which God has commanded. Thus we ought chiefly to apply our ſelves to the Obſervation of thoſe moſt eſſential Duties, to puriſie our Hearts, and to ſettle in them Faith and a true Fear of God. Nevertheleſs, we are likewiſe taught by our Saviour, that although external Duties be not the moſt neceſſary, yet we muſt not omit nor deſpiſe them. The Threatenings which Chriſt makes againſt the *Jews*, who, after having murder'd the Prophets, would put Him to Death likewiſe, ſhews, that the

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Ingratitude of ſuch as reject the Word of God and his Servants, will not remain unpuniſhed. *Laſtly*, The Tenderneſs wherewith our Saviour deplores the Ruine of the *Jews*, that had made ſuch ill Returns to his Goodneſs, proves very clearly, that God only deſires the Salvation of Men; and that if there are any who periſh, it is wholly through their own Fault.

CHAP. XXIV. 1,——28.

OUR Lord foretels the Deſtruction of the Temple of *Jeruſalem*; and being asked by his Diſciples, when it would happen, and what Signs ſhould precede ſuch Deſtruction, and the End of the World, anſwers them, that there ſhould ariſe falſe Prophets, who would call themſelves the Meſſiah; that there would be Wars, Famine, and all ſorts of Calamities; that his Diſciples would be Perſecuted, and that the Goſpel would be preached in ſeveral Parts of the World. He ſays moreover, that when the Abomination of Deſolation ſhould come into the holy Place, that is, when the Idolaters ſhould enter *Judea*, and beſiege *Jeruſalem* and the Temple, this would be a Sign that its Deſtruction was near; and that then People ſhould retire and fly away, that they might avoid the Miſeries which would fall at that Time upon the ſaid City, and upon the *Jewiſh* Nation.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Predictions in this Chapter are applicable both to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and to the End of the World; and we muſt conſider, in the firſt Place, that all that

that Chriſt foretold here, came to paſs ſoon after his Aſcenſion. For there did ariſe ſeveral falſe Meſſiahs, and ſeveral Impoſtors, who, under the Pretext of Zeal and Religion, ſeduced the *Jews*, and ſtirred up Seditions through all *Judea*. There were likewiſe Wars, in which an infinite Number of the *Jews* were deſtroy'd, and abundance of them carried off by Famine and Peſtilence: The Apoſtles and Chriſtians were Perſecuted, the Goſpel was Preached and Eſtabliſh'd in ſeveral Countries, the *Romans* entred *Judea*, beſieged *Jeruſalem*, and demoliſh'd it with its Temple; and the Chriſtians making uſe of the Warnings of our Saviour, retired from that City and were ſaved, whilſt the *Jews* periſhed miſerably. Theſe great Events, and the exact Accompliſhments of our Saviour's Predictions, do not ſuffer us to doubt of the Divinity of the Goſpel. We ſee there a remarkable Inſtance of the Judgments of God upon Unbelievers, as well as of his Protection of the Faithful. *Finally*, This ought to convince us, that all that Chriſt ſaid about the End of the World, and about the laſt Deſtruction of the Wicked, will be fulfilled in the like Manner. We ſhould therefore at the Hearing of all theſe Things, ſtrengthen our ſelves in Faith and Holineſs, and in the Expectation of the ſecond Coming of *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord, who will come at the laſt Day to judge Men, and to render to all according to their Works.

CHAP. XXIV. 29,——51.

OUR Lord continues to ſpeak of that which was to come to paſs at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and at the End of the World. He ſays, that *the Sun and the Stars*

ſhould be darkened; that is to ſay, that there would happen great Revolutions in the World, and in the State of the *Jews*; and that there would be ſeen on all Hands, Tokens of the Wrath of God, which would fill Mankind with Terror. He adds, that the *Sign of the Son of Man would appear*; which ſignifies, that Chriſt would manifeſt, after an illuſtrious and pompous Manner, by deſtroying the *Jews*, and eſtabliſhing his Kingdom, that He was the Son of God. He declares that theſe Things ſhould happen before the Generation that then was ſhould paſs away; that the exact Time and the Day of his Coming ſhould be known to no Body, and that this Coming would ſurpriſe Men, as the Flood did the Inhabitants of the firſt World. *Laſtly*, He recommends to his Diſciples to watch, and to hold themſelves always in readineſs, that they might not be ſurpriſed when He came; upon which Occaſion He propoſes to them the Compariſon of a vigilant and faithful Servant, and of an unfaithful one.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE muſt obſerve upon this, as well as upon the former Part of this Chapter, that all the Prophecies of our Lord were fulfilled at the Time of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and particularly, that it happen'd as Chriſt had declared in expreſs Words before the then Generation was paſs'd away, being about Forty Years after his Death; which proves with the ſtrongeſt Evidence, the Truth and Divinity of thoſe Predictions; we may moreover conſider, that as Chriſt came formerly to deſtroy the *Jews*, He will likewiſe return at the End of the World; that his Coming will be preceded by

by terrible Signs, that the Time of ſuch Coming is concealed from us, as well as that of our own Death, to the end, that we might be continually prepared, and that that Day, ſo formidable to the Wicked, may not ſurpriſe us, as the Deluge did Mankind in the Time of *Noah*, nor as the *Jews* were ſurpriſed at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. Chriſt ſhews us himſelf that this is the Uſe we are to make of his whole Diſcourſe, by the Similitude of the good and bad Servant; and by the Exhortation denoting the End of the ſaid Similitude, and of all that is contained in this Chapter: *Watch therefore, for you know not what Hour your Lord doth come.*

CHAP. XXV. 1,——30.

OUR Lord, after having ſpoken in the foregoing Chapter of his Coming, and having exhorted his Diſciples to Watchfulneſs, continues his Diſcourſe, and ſhews by the Parable of the Ten Virgins, and by that of the Talents, the Neceſſity of Watching, and of preparing for the ſaid Coming.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Parable of the Virgins is taken from the Practice of the *Jews* at their Weddings, at which their Maidens were uſed to meet the Bridegroom and Bride with lighted Lamps; and by this Parable Chriſt gave his Diſciples to underſtand, that they were continually to expect, and be prepared for his Coming. The Wiſe Virgins repreſent the true Believers, that live in the Faith and Practice of all their Duties, and in the Expectation of our Lord's Coming; and the Fooliſh Virgins repreſent the falſe

tChriſtians, who neglect thoſe Duties. Chriſt eaches us here, that He will come to judge the World when He is leaſt expected, and that then thoſe that ſhall be found ready will be filled with Joy, and with a holy Confidence, and ſhall enter with Him into his Glory; He ſhews us on the other Hand, what will be the Miſery and Deſpair of the Wicked, how earneſtly they will wiſh to partake of the Happineſs of the Righteous, and the vain Efforts they will make to be admitted thereto. We may obſerve *Three* Things upon the Parable of the Talents: *Firſt*, That God calls Men to ſerve Him, and that He grants his Grace and his Gifts to ſome more, to others leſs; to the end that each of them may employ them according to his Calling, and the Meaſure he has received thereof, to the Glory of God, and Salvation of Men. *Secondly*, That ſome, like the faithful Servants, make a good Uſe of his Favours by their Zeal and Induſtry; and that others render them uſeleſs by their Negligence. *Thirdly*, That God will oblige both the one and the other to render an Account of their Behaviour; that He will praiſe and reward the Fidelity of thoſe that have employ'd his Gifts in Promoting his Glory, and that thoſe who have abuſed them, ſhall be puniſhed for their Unbelief. And that they will be without excuſe, becauſe God never requires of Men more than they are able to perform. Thus, by each of theſe Parables, Chriſt teaches us after what manner He will judge thoſe Men, to whom He has given the Knowledge of Himſelf; He warns us to adhere to our Duty with Conſtancy, and that each of us ſerve Him in our reſpective Vocations, to the end, that when He comes, He may ſay to us: *Well done good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV. 31,——46.

WHAT we are about to Read, contains the Deſcription of the laſt Judgment.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have heard what Chriſt ſaid about his laſt Coming, and of the univerſal Judgment. There are Four chief Things to be obſerved in the Deſcription He makes thereof. The *Firſt* is, That He will come down from Heaven with Glory, and that it is He who ſhall judge the World. *Secondly*, That all Men ſhall appear before Him, and all be judged by Him. The *Third* is, That He will judge them by their Works, and that He will chiefly have reſpect to the Works of Charity, and to the good that is done to his Members; becauſe ſuch Works are Arguments and Effects of Faith, and of the Love that we have for Him. The *Fourth* Thing is, That He will ſeparate the Good from the Wicked, by receiving the Good into the Kingdom of Heaven, and caſting the Wicked into Hell Fire. Since Chriſt has ſo expreſly warned us of all theſe Things, and ſince we know that we muſt all appear before his Tribunal, to receive according to the Good or Evil we ſhall have done, let us behave our ſelves with Godlineſs and Fear during the Time of our Abode in this World; let us adhere to the Practice of good Works, and above all, to thoſe of Mercy and Charity; to the end, that at the Day of the laſt and glorious Appearance of the Son of God, we may be free from that Terror and Deſpair which will then fall upon the Wicked, and appear before Him with Joy

and Confidence, and be of the Number of thoſe to whom He ſhall ſay: *Come, ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.*

CHAP. XXVI. 1,——35.

HERE begins the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Paſſion; and St. *Matthew* relates, I. That the Prieſts formed a Reſolution to put Chriſt to Death. II. That a Woman anointed our Lord with a precious Oil. III. That *Judas* bargained with the Prieſts to deliver up his Maſter to them. And, IV. That Chriſt celebrated the Paſſover, and that, during that Repaſt, He made mention of the Treachery of *Judas*; inſtituted the holy Supper, and foretold that St. *Peter* ſhould deny Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt Reflexion we have to make is, that *Jeſus* knowing He was to be Crucified at the Feaſt of the Paſſover, repaired to *Jeruſalem* at that Time; and that although the Prieſts did not intend to have put Him to Death during that Feſtival, yet it was the Will of God that He ſhould then die, becauſe it was the Time of Offering up the Paſchal Lamb, which was the Type of Sacrificing our Lord, and to the end that the *Jews*, who came from all Parts upon that Account, might be Witneſſes of his Death. II. What Chriſt ſaid to defend the Action of that Woman, who anointed Him with a precious Balſam, ſhews us, that He accepts of whatever we do to teſtifie our Love and our Reſpect for Him; this ought likewiſe to induce us to judge favourably of other Mens Actions, eſpecially when proceeding from a good

good Principle; to imitate the Zeal of that Woman, in Honouring our Saviour by all poſſible Means: And, *Laſtly*, to do good to the Poor. III. The Agreement of *Judas* with the Prieſts, is a Proof into what Crimes, and how great Obdurateneſs, Avarice will lead Men, and how careful we ought to be, that that Paſſion do not ſteal into, and root it ſelf in our Hearts. IV. Let it be obſerved, that *Jeſus Chriſt* foretold the Treaſon of *Judas*, and did it, that to the end he might make him ſenſible that his Deſign was known to Him, and to prevent him from engaging in it if it were poſſible, and moreover, that his Diſciples might confeſs, that nothing could befal Him but what He had foreſeen, and was contented to expoſe himſelf to. V. The Inſtitution of the holy Supper, which Chriſt eſtabliſh'd then, to be a Memorial of his Death to the End of the World, obliges us to hold that Sacrament in great Reverence, and to celebrate it in a Manner conformable to the Inſtitutions of our bleſſed Redeemer. VI. Chriſt's Prediction, that St. *Peter* ſhould deny Him, proves, that our Lord ſees the Heart, and knows Futurity; and what He ſaid to that Apoſtle, who anſwer'd Him with ſo much Aſſurance, ſhould teach us, never to preſume too much upon our own Strength, but to diſtruſt our ſelves, and be continually upon our Guard againſt Temptation.

CHAP. XXVI. 36,——56.

IN this Part of the Hiſtory of the Paſſion we ſee, I. What our Lord ſuffered in the Garden. II. How He was taken by *Judas*, and what happened upon that Occaſion.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE ought moſt ſeriouſly to reflect upon what Chriſt ſuffered in the Garden, and eſpecially the extream Sorrow and Terrors which he then felt. It was the Will of God that He ſhould undergo all thoſe Things, that it might appear He died for the Sins of Mankind. And we ought to judge, by the Condition to which our Saviour was then reduced, how great is the Horror of Sin, and how dreadful the Puniſhments will be which wicked Men are one day to ſuffer. Thoſe humble and fervent Prayers which Chriſt made to God in his Agony, teach us to pray with Perſeverance and Submiſſion, eſpecially when we are in Affliction. The Reſignation of our Lord to the Will of his Father, is a Proof of his perfect Obedience to Him, and of his Love towards us, and ought to be a Pattern to us, to the end, that in what Condition ſoever He thinks fit to place us, we may always ſay to Him: *Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.* The Warning that Chriſt gave his Apoſtles, to watch and pray, leſt they ſhould ſink under that great Temptation to which they were going to be expoſed, is a moſt wholſome Advice, ſerving to teach us, that Watchfulneſs and Prayer are the principal Means to reſiſt Temptation, and that we are overcome by them when we neglect thoſe Means. In the manner by which *Judas* cauſed our Lord to be apprehended, we may ſee on one Hand, the Treachery of that wretched Diſciple, and on the other, the Readineſs and Chearfulneſs with which Chriſt expoſed Himſelf to Death. The Action of St. *Peter*, who ſmote with his Sword one of thoſe that came to apprehend Chriſt, is to be conſidered as the Effect of a raſh Zeal; and the Rebuke that our Saviour gave that Apoſtle, is a Leſſon to us never to proceed to Violence

olence upon any Occaſion whatever. It likewiſe furniſhes us with a noble Inſtance of the great Goodneſs, Patience, and Meekneſs of *Jeſus Chriſt*; all which it is our Duty to imitate.

CHAP. XXVI. 57,——75.

WE ſee here, I. What happened when *Jeſus* was brought before the Council of the *Jews* and there Condemned. II. The Fall and Repentance of St. *Peter*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THAT which is to be obſerved upon the Appearance of Chriſt before the Council of the *Jews* is, I. That notwithſtanding all the Endeavours of the *Jews* to find out falſe Witneſſes, with a Deſign to condemn Him, He could not be convicted of any Crime, and therefore was only condemned for acknowledging Himſelf the Son of God. In this we diſcover on one Hand the Hatred and Injuſtice of the *Jews*, and on the other, the entire Innocence of our Saviour. It is to be noted, II. With what Patience He ſuffered all the Injuries and Affronts, and all the unjuſt Treatment which He received from them; and it may cauſe us to remember what St. *Peter* ſaid upon this Occaſion: That *Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an Example, that ye ſhould follow his Steps*, 1 Pet. ii. 21. III. What our Lord ſaid to the *Jews*, when they condemned Him to Death, namely, that they ſhould ſee Him coming in the Clouds of Heaven, deſerves a particular Attention. Here we may obſerve *Jeſus Chriſt* ſpeaking as a King, and as the Son of God; and the Eſtabliſhment of his Kingdom, as well as the Deſtruction of the *Jews*, did ſoon after verifie what He had fore-

foretold upon that Occaſion; but it will be yet more perfectly fulfilled at his laſt Coming. IV. The Fall of St. *Peter*, who, after having been warned by our Lord, and after having proteſted that he would never renounce Him, did yet deny Him three Times, even with Imprecations and Oaths, is a ſad Inſtance of humane Inconſtancy and Frailty. We ſee thereby, that even thoſe who have the beſt Intentions, may greatly fall when they are not fortified againſt Temptation; and that to ſecure our ſelves from it, it behoves us to ſtand upon our Guard, and to ſuſpect our ſelves; to pray without ceaſing, and to ſhun the Places, and avoid the Occaſions that may draw us into Sin. But we muſt likewiſe conſider, that if the Fall of St. *Peter* was great, his Repentance was quick and hearty, and that he bitterly bewailed his Fault. So ought we to do alſo when we happen to fall, and to riſe quickly and atone for the ſame by the Tears of a ſincere Repentance, and by a true Amendment of our Lives.

CHAP. XXVII. 1,——26.

WHAT we are about to read contains Two Things: I. *Judas* ſeeing that Chriſt was Condemned, acknowledged his Crime, and laid violent Hands upon himſelf. II. *Jeſus* appeared before *Pilate*, the Governour of *Jeruſalem*, who, after having made ſeveral Attempts to deliver Him, and to pacifie the *Jews*, did at laſt pronounce the Sentence of his Condemnation.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Confeſſion *Judas* made of his Crime, and his Tragical End, ſhew the Innocence

cence of our Lord, and how unjuſtly He was Condemned. It likewiſe diſcovers the State of a guilty Conſcience, and the Horror of the Remorſes, and of the Deſpair wherewith the Wicked are agitated when they become ſenſible of their Crimes, and are purſued by Divine Vengeance. The Uſe to which the *Jews* put the Money that *Judas* returned them, ſerves to perpetuate the Memory of this Event, as it was a Proof of the Injuſtice which they had committed, and it is a plain Accompliſhment of the Prophecy of *Zachariah.* II. As to what happen'd before *Pilate*, it muſt be obſerved, that Chriſt owned in his Preſence, as He had already before the Council, that He was the Meſſiah. Thus it is that we ought to aſſert Truth, even at the Peril of our Lives, as often as we are called thereto. We ſee moreover, in this Hiſtory, the Rage of the *Jews*, which nothing was capable of Mollifying, and how they preferred the ſaving of a Murderer and a ſeditious Perſon, before *Jeſus Chriſt*; the Innocence of our Lord may alſo be there obſerved, ſince it was acknowledged by *Pilate* himſelf; and particularly the Iniquity of that Judge, who, after a long Oppoſition, did yet yield to his Death at laſt, notwithſtanding the Warnings He received from his Wife, and tho' he was perſuaded that he condemned an innocent Man. We have therefore an Example in *Pilate*, of thoſe that Sin againſt Light, and that ſacrifice their Duty and their Conſcience to Fear, Compliance, and Intereſt; as well as of thoſe that think themſelves Guiltleſs when they commit the greateſt Crimes, and that throw upon others the Blame of ſuch Actions whereof they themſelves are the Authors. This teaches us to adhere always inviolably to our Duty, and to purſue with Courage and Steadineſs the Moti-

Motions of our own Conſcience, without ſuffering any Conſideration whatever to turn us aſide. As for what relates to the *Jews*, we ought moſt ſeriouſly to reflect upon theſe Words of theirs: *His Blood be on us, and on our Children.* Both they and their Poſterity have found the Effects of this Imprecation which they made againſt themſelves, God having revenged the Death of his Son upon that guilty Nation, by the Deſtruction of their City, and by that miſerable Condition in which they have ever ſince remained.

CHAP. XXVII. 27,——65.

WE ſee here, I. The Crucifixion and Death of *Jeſus Chriſt*. II. The wonderful Things that then happened. III. His Burial.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. AFter having heard the Relation of our Saviour's Paſſion, and ſeen what Contempt and Pain He was expoſed to before his Crucifixion, and whilſt He was upon the Croſs, we ought to conſider, that He ſuffer'd all theſe Things for the Expiation of our Sins, and to confirm, by his Death, the Promiſes He has made us of Life Everlaſting. The Uſe we are to make of this important Paſſage of the Goſpel is, to conſider that Death as the wonderful Means whereby God has ſaved us; to praiſe his Mercy in Delivering up his Son to Death, and the Love of our gracious Saviour in giving Himſelf for us; let us therefore love Him as He has loved us, and ſeek our Salvation in Him only. The Sufferings of Chriſt ought likewiſe to make us renounce Sin, ſince He died to deſtroy it;

it; and teach us alſo to ſuffer, and to bear our Croſs with Patience. II. The ſeveral Prodigies that happen'd at his Death, betoken the Horror of the Crime which the *Jews* had then committed. God was likewiſe pleaſed to ſhew thereby, that *Jeſus Chriſt* was his Son, that the Worſhip of the *Jews* was drawing to an end, and their Temple going to be deſtroy'd, and that Heaven ſhould thenceforwards be open to Men. Particularly, the Rending of the Sepulchres of thoſe who roſe with our Lord, denoted, that *Jeſus* ſhould come out of his Tomb, and that the Dead ſhould riſe at the laſt Day by the Efficacy of his Death. III. With reſpect to the Burial of our Lord, we may conſider, that He was interred, to the end that People might be more fully ſatisfy'd that He was really dead; and that He was put into a Sepulchre, where none had yet lain, to ſhew, that it was He himſelf that aroſe from thence. The Circumſtances of his Burial, as well as thoſe of his Paſſion, diſcloſe to us the Accompliſhment of ſeveral Prophecies. And the Opinion that Chriſt has been buried, is very proper to ſoften the Horror of our Death and Burial, which we ſhould otherwiſe have conceived of it. *Laſtly*, It is a thing worthy to be noted, that the *Jews* cauſed our Lord's Sepulchre to be ſo ſtrictly cloſed and watched, becauſe, contrary to their own Intentions, they furniſh us thereby with undeniable Proofs of his Reſurrection.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

IN this laſt Chapter of the Goſpel of St. *Matthew*, we ſee, I. The Reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt*. II. What the *Jews* did to perſuade the People that his Diſciples had taken away his Body. III. Chriſt appearing to the Apoſtles, and the Directions He gave them before He aſcended into Heaven.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THERE are three Principal Conſiderations to be made upon the Reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt*. I. That God's ſending his Angels to take Him out of the Sepulchre, is an undeniable Proof that He is the Son of God. II. That that Reſurrection was a certain Fact atteſted by Angels, by the Women that ſaw our Saviour, and afterwards by the Apoſtles, and by a great Number of other Perſons. III. And above all, that the Reſurrection is the Foundation of our Salvation, and of all our Hopes, ſince we are thereby fully aſſured, that we are reconciled to God, and that we ſhall riſe again at the laſt Day. What the chief Men among the *Jews* did to perſuade the People that Chriſt's Diſciples had taken away his Body, diſcovers the extream Malice and invincible Obſtinacy of his Enemies; but all their Precautions are vain, and what they feared did not fail to happen; thus God confounds the Wicked and their Deſigns. *Laſtly*, What our Saviour ſaid to his Apoſtles, of the ſupreme Power to which He was about to be exalted, the Orders He gave them to preach and to baptize, and the Promiſe He made of being with them to the End of the World, ought all to be

ſeriouſly conſidered. Chriſt ſpoke then to his Diſciples as King of the World, and ſhewed plainly that his Doctrine was going to be ſpread over all the Earth, and that his Church ſhould ſubſiſt for ever. The Succeſs of the Preaching of the Apoſtles, and the Eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian Religion, proved afterwards, and does ſtill prove the Truth of theſe laſt Words of our Lord; and they are ſo many powerful Motives to induce us to believe in Him, to confeſs the Divinity of his Doctrine, and to reverence the Baptiſm which He has inſtituted, and by which we are conſecrated to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; to adore his Power, and to keep all his Commandments. May He himſelf give us Grace to do it. *Amen.*

St. *MARK.*

CHAP. I. 1,——20.

THIS Goſpel was writ ſome Time after that of St. *Matthew*, and, as it is thought, about Ten Years after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, by St. *Mark*, under the Inſpection of the Apoſtle St. *Peter*. In the firſt Part of this Chapter, the Evangeliſt treats, I. Of the Miniſtry of *John* the Baptiſt. II. Of the Baptiſm of our Lord. III. Of his Temptation. IV. Of the Beginning of his Preaching in *Galilee*. And, V. of the Call of ſome of the Apoſtles.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. *Mark* ſhews us, at the Beginning of his Goſpel, I. That *John* the Baptiſt was ſent from God, conformable to what was foretold of him by the Prophets, to declare the Manifeſtation of the *Meſſiah*, and of the Kingdom of God, by preaching Repentance, and baptizing thoſe that confeſſed their Sins, and by warning the

the People that the *Meſſiah* was about to appear. God was pleaſed thereby to prepare the *Jews* for the Reception of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and to teach them that the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* would be a ſpiritual Kingdom, and that he came into the World to eſtabliſh Holineſs therein, and to turn Men to God; ſo that we ought to look upon Repentance and Amendment of our Lives, as the Deſign of our Lord's Coming; and this is what He himſelf has taught us, having begun his Miniſtry by preaching Repentance and Faith: Saying, *Repent ye, and believe the Goſpel.* II. What happened at the Baptiſm of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Voice which God cauſed to be heard from Heaven, tended to make known to *John* the Baptiſt, and to the People, that *Jeſus* was the Son of God, and the *Meſſiah*; and it obliges us to receive his Doctrine with Obedience and Faith. III. It was likewiſe to ſhew, that He was really his Son, that God was pleaſed to ſuffer Him to be tempted in the Deſart, and that after his Temptation, the Angels came to miniſter to Him. IV, and V. *Laſtly*, The Choice which our Lord made of ſome Fiſhermen to be his Apoſtles, ſhews that He came not to eſtabliſh a temporal and worldly Kingdom, ſince thoſe People had nothing whereby to diſtinguiſh themſelves in this World; this likewiſe proves, that the wonderful Effects of his Miniſtry proceded not from them, but that the whole Glory thereof is to be given to God alone.

CHAP. I. 21,——45.

ST. *Mark* relates ſeveral Miracles that Chriſt wrought in *Galilee* at the beginning of his Miniſtry. I. The Cure of a Man poſſeſſed by

an unclean Spirit. II. That of St. *Peter*'s Mother in Law, and ſeveral other diſeaſed Perſons. And, III. *Laſtly*, that of a Leper.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TO read with Advantage the Hiſtory of the ſeveral Miracles of *Jeſus Chriſt*, we ſhould obſerve concerning them, I. That divine Power whereby He drove away Devils, and healed in an Inſtant, and by his Word only, all kind of Diſeaſes. II. His Goodneſs and Love towards Men appeared in thoſe Miracles, ſince He only exerted his Power for the doing of Good. III. We may conſider, that theſe Miracles tended to prove that He was the Son of God, and that his Doctrine was true, and divine; and this was the Reaſon why He did not work them commonly, but in favour of ſuch who believed that He was able to do them, and who deſired the ſame. IV. That He nevertheleſs took all the care He could, that thoſe Miracles ſhould not make too great a Noiſe; this He did upon prudential Reaſons, leaſt thoſe among the *Jews*, that own'd Him for the *Meſſiah*, ſhould have raiſed Commotions and Tumults in order to declare Him King, according to the Belief they then had, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be a Temporal King. All theſe Things ought to convince us of the Divinity of the Goſpel, and that Chriſt is a charitable Saviour, and full of Goodneſs. And, *Laſtly*, to teach us that it is only by Faith and Prayer we can obtain his Favour. It muſt be obſerved particularly upon the Healing of the Leper, that our Lord order'd him to ſhew himſelf to the Prieſt, and to offer what the Law directed in thoſe Caſes; this He did to let the *Jews* ſee, that He obſerved

ſerved all that was ordered by the Law of God, and alſo to convince them that the Man was really cured.

CHAP. II.

I. CHRIST cures a Paralitical Perſon. II. Calls St. *Matthew* to the Office of an Apoſtle. III. He gives his Reaſons why He eat with Sinners, and why He did not oblige his Diſciples to Faſt, like thoſe of *John* the Baptiſt. IV. He returns an Anſwer to the *Phariſees*, who blamed his Apoſtles for plucking the Ears of Corn upon a Sabbath-Day.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE ſee here, I. In the Cure which our Saviour wrought upon the Man that was ſick of the Palſie, that He had reſpect to the Faith of thoſe who brought the Man to Him; and that He declared at the ſame Time that his Sins were forgiven. From whence it appears, that beſides the Power of Healing Diſtempers, Chriſt had alſo that of forgiving Sin, which obliges us to conſider Him, not only as a great Prophet, but likewiſe as our Judge, and as Him from whom we may expect Health to our Souls, and Pardon of our Offences, by the Means of Faith and Repentance. II. We learn from this Chapter, that our Lord is come into the World to call Sinners to Repentance, which He gave to underſtand by eating with Publicans, and ſuch other Perſons as the *Jews* looked upon to be great Sinners. This Doctrine ought to fill us with truſt, and at the ſame time make us acknowledge, that it is abſolutely neceſſary to repent, and amend our Lives, if we would be ſaved. III. We muſt conſider with

reſpect to the Buſineſs of Faſting, that altho' Chriſt did not ſubject his Diſciples to the regular Faſts, ſuch as thoſe obſerved by the Diſciples of *John* the Baptiſt, or by the *Phariſees*, yet it was not that He condemned Faſting, but it was for the ſame Reaſons for which He himſelf did not lead ſo rigid and retired a Life as *John* the Baptiſt; namely, becauſe his Miniſtry obliged Him to go from Place to Place, and converſe with all kinds of People. But He declared however, that his Diſciples ſhould be called afterwards not only to Faſtings, but to great Sufferings; and that if they were not called thereto even then, it was to ſpare their Weakneſs; and this is the Meaning of the Parable of old Cloth, and of old Bottles for Wine. IV. We ſee, *Laſtly*, That Chriſt juſtifies the Action of his Diſciples, who, being preſt with Hunger, pluck'd the Ears of Corn upon a Sabbath-Day, upon which occaſion He quoted what *David* did in a like Caſe. This teaches us, that in extream Neceſſity, and when the external Duties of Religion can't be obſerv'd but with great Inconvenience or Evil, they may be diſpens'd with, provided it be not out of Contempt, and that we never violate the Eſſentials of Religion, it being nothing but Hypocriſie and Superſtition to act otherwiſe.

CHAP. III.

THE Evangeliſt relates, I. The Healing of a Man whoſe Hand was wither'd, and of ſeveral other diſeaſed Perſons. II. The Calling of the Twelve Apoſtles. III. What Chriſt ſaid to the *Phariſees*, who aſcribed his Miracles to the Power of the Devil. IV. His Declaration, that his true Diſciples were as dear to Him as his own Kindred.

Re-

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE continue to obſerve the great Goodneſs and Sovereign Power of our Lord, in the ſeveral Miracles mention'd in this Chapter, which is very proper to confirm our Faith, and to fill us with Confidence in Him. We ſee, I. in particular, with reſpect to the Cure wrought upon the Man whoſe Hand was withered, the great Blindneſs and Malice of the *Phariſees*, who were ſcandaliz'd at Chriſt's healing the Sick upon the Sabbath-Day; as alſo how He reduc'd them to ſilence, and lamented their Obſtinacy and Hypocriſie. II. The Choice our Lord made of the Twelve Apoſtles to be with Him, and the Power He gave them to work Miracles, like to thoſe done by Himſelf, muſt be look'd upon as an effect of his great Wiſdom, as well as of his Goodneſs towards all Men, ſince He was afterwards to make uſe of the Miniſtry of thoſe Apoſtles, that cauſed the Goſpel to be preach'd throughout the World. III. The Wickedneſs and Blaſphemy of the *Phariſees*, who affirm'd that Chriſt was poſſeſs'd with a Devil, and perform'd his Miracles by the Help of the Prince of the Devils, is an Example to prove, that when once Men have abandon'd themſelves to their Prejudices and Paſſions, they are harden'd againſt all that can be offer'd to them, though never ſo clear, and never ſo ſtrong; and that inſtead of yielding, they become yet more Headſtrong and Wicked. And the terrible Puniſhment our Lord denounc'd againſt the *Phariſees* ſhews, that the Converſion of ſuch as thus reſiſt the Truth and the Holy Ghoſt, becomes at laſt impoſſible, and that God will puniſh them with the greateſt Severity. IV. Our

Lord's declaring that He loved his true Diſciples as much as his neareſt Relations, teaches us, that the ſureſt Means of being loved by Him, is to ſet our ſelves to hear his Word, and to do his Will; and that we likewiſe, in Imitation of Him, ought particularly to cheriſh thoſe Perſons that fear God, and to eſteem them preferably to all others.

CHAP. IV. 1,——26.

THE firſt Part of this Chapter is taken up with the Parable of the Seed, and its Explanation.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Explanation which *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf has given to the Similitude of the Seed, ſets it in a perfect Light, and denotes the Meaning and Uſe thereof. This is what the Saviour of the World has thought fit to teach us by it: The Seed that fell upon the Way, repreſents thoſe who hear the Goſpel, but do not receive it, nor are affected with it. The Seed that fell upon Rocky Places, denotes thoſe who receive the Word of God only for a Time, but in Perſecution and Temptation forſake Chriſt. The Seed that fell among Thorns, and was thereby choaked, is the Type of thoſe in whom this Word would produce Fruit, if their Heart were not taken up with the Love of the good Things and Pleaſures of the World, and with the Cares of this Life. And the Seed ſown in good Ground, deſcribes thoſe who have a good and well-diſpoſed Heart, and in whom the Goſpel produces Fruit and wholſome Effects. Now it is our Duty to examine our ſelves, and to try whether we are of the Number of thoſe har-

harden'd ones, upon whom the Word of God makes no Impreſſion; or of thoſe inconſtant and cowardly ones, who, after having been affected, do not perſevere; or of thoſe carnal or worldly ones, in whom the Word is render'd unprofitable, by the Love of the good Things and Pleaſures of this Life; or, *Laſtly*, of thoſe faithful Hearers, who bring forth in Abundance the Fruits which God expects from them. Let theſe Divine Inſtructions take Root in our Heart, and as Chriſt himſelf has exhorted us, let us take heed to the manner how we receive them, always remembring, by what has been ſaid, that God increaſes his Lights and Gifts in thoſe that make a right Uſe of them; but that He takes them away from ſuch as abuſe them, or that do not improve thereby.

CHAP. IV. 26,—41.

THIS Chapter contains Two Things. I. The Parable of the Seed caſt into the Earth, and at length producing its Fruit: And that of a Grain of Muſtard. And, II. Chriſt's laying the Storm.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Deſign of our Lord by the Similitude of the Seed thrown into the Earth, and growing by little and little; and by the other, of a Grain of Muſtard, was to ſhew, that notwithſtanding there was no great Appearance at that Time that his Doctrine ſhould make any conſiderable Progreſs, by reaſon of his own lowly State, and the ſmall Number of thoſe that receive the ſame, yet it would ſoon be ſpread throughout the whole

Earth, by the Means of the Preaching of the Apoſtles. Chriſt expreſſed theſe Things in Parables, becauſe He would not then declare openly that his Goſpel was to be preached to other Nations, for fear of ſhocking and ſcandalizing the *Jews*: but theſe Parables were very obvious and plain afterwards, by the Eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian Religion, ſo that they do now furniſh us with invincible Proofs of the Truth of the Goſpel. II. In the Hiſtory of the Miracle which our Saviour wrought by calming a Tempeſt, we may obſerve the great Concern of the Apoſtles, who were afraid of Periſhing, though *Jeſus* was in the midſt of them; which ſhewed, that their Faith was ſtill weak, as He himſelf reproach'd them. We may likewiſe diſcover therein his Goodneſs towards them, and that wonderful Power, which turn'd their Fear into Aſtoniſhment, and fill'd them with Joy and Admiration. The Uſe we are to make of this Hiſtory is, that though God ſuffer his Church, and his Children, to be expoſed to the utmoſt Dangers, we ought never to be diſcouraged, becauſe God does it to try our Faith; and that we need fear nothing, provided the Lord be with us; and that He is always ready to deliver us when He ſees fit.

CHAP. V. 1——20.

THE Evangeliſt relates a moſt remarkable Miracle which our Saviour wrought, by delivering a Man poſſeſſed with a Legion of Devils.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Hiſtory does very much deſerve our Attention. We may obſerve here, in a moſt ſenſible manner, the Power which the Devils exerciſed in thoſe Ages, by the Permiſſion of God, over Mankind; but we ſee likewiſe, that Chriſt had a Sovereign Authority over them; that He came to deſtroy the Kingdom of the Devil; and that He was always ready to diſplay his Power in Favour of ſuch as wanted his Aſſiſtance. Our Lord, after having deliver'd this Demoniack, gave the Devils leave to enter into the Swine, and to hurry them headlong into the Sea, that it might appear that this Man was really poſſeſs'd, and to prove the Truth and Greatneſs of the Miracle which He had wrought; it was likewiſe to ſhew, that the Devils could do nothing but by his Permiſſion. *Laſtly*, This muſt be look'd upon as a Trial and a Chaſtiſement of the Inhabitants of thoſe Parts, who, as the Hiſtory informs us, would not bear our Saviour among them. This obliges us to thank God, that ſince the Coming of *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Devil has not the ſame Power as he had formerly over Mankind. As to the reſt, we may conſider, that as ſad and deplorable as was the Condition of this Demoniack, yet it was by no means ſo dreadful as that of Sinners, who abandon themſelves to Evil, and who are Slaves to the Devil and their own Paſſions; ſince this Man did not fall into this ſorrowful Condition by his own Fault, and that beſides, the Devil could only hurt his Body, whereas Sinners do, of their own accord, become his Slaves, by performing his Will, by which means, this Enemy

of

of God and Man, draws their Souls into the Abyss of everlasting Destruction.

CHAP. V. 21,——43.

ST. *Mark* relates Two Miracles of Christ. I. The Healing of a Woman of an Issue of Blood. And, II. the Raising from the Dead the Daughter of *Jairus*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

BEsides the general Reflexions that we ought to make upon all the Miracles of our Saviour, those that are related in this Chapter, engage us to consider chiefly the Two following Things. I. The Example of that Woman, whose Faith our Lord commends, and who was healed by touching the Hem of his Garment, proves, that Humility and Faith have a great Efficacy, that Trust in *Jesus Christ* is never vain, and that He is always ready to extend his Favours to those that apply themselves to Him in such Dispositions. II. We see in this Miracle, the great Power of our Lord; but it appears yet with much more Lustre, in the Resurrection of the Daughter of *Jairus*; upon which it must be observed, that Christ did not only heal the Sick, but that He likewise restored Life to the Dead; whereby He did both display his infinite Power, and confirm the Promises which He has made of raising us up at the last Day. Thus the Consideration of this Miracle is of a very great Efficacy to produce in us a firm Hope of the Immortality of the Soul, to fill us with Comfort in the Expectation thereof, and to encourage us more and more to the Study and Practice of Piety and good Works, to the end, that we may one Day partake

take of that ſame bleſſed Reſurrection which Chriſt has promiſed, and which we wait for.

CHAP. VI. 1,——29.

WE have here an Account, I. Of our Saviour's Arrival at *Nazareth*, and of the Unbelief of the Inhabitants of that Town. II. Of the Miſſion of the Twelve Apoſtles to *Judea*. III. Of the Death of *John* the Baptiſt.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THESE are the Reflexions which we ought to make upon the Three abovemention'd Heads: I. The firſt relates to the Unbelief and Ingratitude of the People of *Nazareth*, who being ſo happy as to have our Saviour among them, did not acknowledge that the Wiſdom and Power which were in Him proceded from God, and made ſo ill a Uſe of his Preſence, which was the Reaſon that He wrought few Miracles in that Place. Thus it is that the Prejudices and Wickedneſs of Men make them neglect the greateſt Advantages, at the Time when they are offer'd to them; it likewiſe ſhews, that if God deprives them of his Grace, it is becauſe they are ſo little ſenſible of it, and becauſe they put Obſtacles and Hindrances in their own Way. II. Upon the Miſſion of the Apoſtles it muſt be obſerv'd, that *Jeſus Chriſt*, by an effect of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs towards the *Jews*, ſent the Apoſtles throughout *Judea*, to declare the Coming of the Kingdom of God; and to render their Preaching more effectual, He gave them the Power of doing Miracles, but forbad them to make

make any Proviſion for that Journey, becauſe it was to be ſhort, and to inure them early to rely upon Providence; and He declar'd, that thoſe who would not receive them, ſhould be puniſh'd moſt ſeverely; whereby we ſee the Condemnation of thoſe to whom God cauſes his Word to be preach'd, and who do not grow better by it. III. As to the Death of *John* the Baptiſt, it is to be attributed to the Hatred that *Herodias* bore him, becauſe he condemned her Marriage with *Herod*; and to the baſe Compliance of that Prince, who ſacrificed *John* the Baptiſt, for whom he had otherwiſe a Veneration, to the Paſſion of that impudent Woman. In this Event we perceive, that vicious Perſons commonly hate thoſe who reprove them for their Diſorderly Lives, and that very great Evils ſpring from Impurity, as well as from the Compliance which People ſhew for the Wicked, and from raſh Oaths. It is nevertheleſs to be noted, that it pleaſed God to ſuffer *John* the Baptiſt to loſe his Life after this manner, that the *Jews* might be prepared for that which was to befal our Lord, of whom this holy Prophet was the Forerunner. 'Tis likewiſe a Thing worthy of Attention, that *Herod*, who was of the Sect of the *Sadducees*, who do not believe a Reſurrection, ſhould imagine that *John* the Baptiſt was come to Life again; this ſhews, that the Wicked and Unbelievers have no fix'd or ſettled Faith, that they are always in Fear, and that the Remorſes with which their Conſciences are tormented, make them ſometimes fancy Things that have no Foundation, and which are contrary even to the Sentiments whereof they make Profeſſion.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI. 30,——56.

I. OUR Lord feeds five Thouſand People after a miraculous Manner. II. His Diſciples being expoſed to a Storm, He goes to them walking upon the Sea. III. He cures many Diſeaſes after He arrived at the Country of *Genezareth*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE are here to obſerve, I. In the firſt Place, the Goodneſs of our Lord, who ſeeing the Condition in which the People were that followed Him, was moved with Compaſſion towards them; and with the Nouriſhment of the Soul, beſtow'd upon them alſo that of the Body, by a wonderful Multiplication of the Loaves. II. He afterwards manifeſted the ſame Goodneſs, as well as Power, when his Diſciples being in danger of Periſhing by a Tempeſt, He went to them walking upon the Sea, and calmed the Rage thereof. This great Miracle tended to convince his Diſciples more and more that He was the Son of God, and it ought to produce the like Effect in us, by cauſing us to admire the marvellous Power of our Lord, and by filling us with Truſt in his Goodneſs. III. *Finally*, When we read that they brought to Chriſt from all Parts the Sick and Diſeaſed, and that they were all healed, even by the bare Touch of his Garment, we ought to believe, that if He thus diſplay'd his Power for the Comfort and Cure of thoſe that were preſented to Him, He is not leſs diſpoſed to ſave all ſuch as ſeek from Him the Cure of their Souls; and this ſhould encourage us to have recourſe

with

with Confidence to our charitable Redeemer, to be aſſiſted by him in all our Wants.

CHAP. VII. 1,——23.

I. THE *Phariſees* complaining that the Diſciples of Chriſt did not waſh themſelves, according to the Cuſtom of the *Jews*, He reproaches them for violating the Commandments of God, by teaching, that if a Child had conſecrated and devoted to God thoſe worldly Goods wherewith he might have aſſiſted his Father or Mother, he was obliged ſtrictly to fulfil ſuch a Vow, nor was any longer at liberty to relieve his Parents in their Wants. II. He afterwards teaches the People and his Diſciples what it was that defiled a Man, and what did not defile him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may learn from hence, I. That it is Hypocriſie ſcrupulouſly to practiſe Ceremonies and Cuſtoms eſtabliſh'd by Men, and to violate the divine Laws and Duties which God has more expreſly commanded; that the true Service of God conſiſts in keeping his Commandments, but that He abhors the Worſhip of Hypocrites, who pretend to honour Him with their Mouths, and with the outſide of Religion, whilſt their Heart is defiled, and far from Him. II. This Diſcourſe of our Saviour teaches us, that it is the Will of God that Children ſhould honour and aſſiſt their Parents, and that nothing can excuſe them from this Duty. III. That thoſe Oaths and Vows, whereby People oblige themſelves to do things contrary to the Law of God, do not bind the Conſcience, and that it would be a Sin to perform them.

But

But above all, Chriſt teaches us now, that what defiles us before God, is properly that which proceeds from the Heart, ſuch as evil Thoughts, impure and unrighteous Deſires; the Hatred of our Neighbour; Envy, Pride and Haughtineſs, and other Paſſions of the like Nature: That theſe evil Thoughts are real Sins, being the Spring of all the wicked Actions that Men commit. Let us *carefully attend* to theſe things, as Chriſt does here exhort us; and let us *underſtand them well*, to the end, that our main Care may be, to avoid that which defiles the Soul, and to acquire Purity of Heart and Conſcience.

CHAP. VII. 24,——57.

ST. *Mark* relates here Two Miracles of our Lord. I. The Healing the Daughter of a *Canaanitiſh* Woman. And, II. that of a Man that was Deaf and Dumb.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt of the Miracles which we have here read, has this ſingularity in it, that it was done in Favour of a Woman who was a Gentile, for which Reaſon it was that *Jeſus* refus'd at firſt to grant her Requeſt, telling her, it was not fit to give the Childrens Bread to Dogs; that is, to work thoſe Miracles in favour of the *Gentiles*, who were Strangers, which Chriſt only did for the ſake of the *Jews*, that were the People of God, and as the Children of the Family. Our Lord uſed this Language, becauſe the *Gentiles* were not to be admitted into the Divine Covenant during his Abode in the World. But that Woman obtain'd at laſt of Him, by her profound Humility, Perſeverance, Faith,

Faith, and Zeal, the Favour which ſhe deſired of Him. We may ſee by this Hiſtory, that the Heathens were not excluded from the Grace of God, and that they were to be ſoon received into it, as well as the *Jews*. We ſee likewiſe, that Prayers, attended with Humility and Zeal, have a great Efficacy; that if they don't obtain for us at firſt all that we deſire of God, He deals thus with us, to ſtir us up, and to give us more lively Sentiments of our own Unworthineſs, but that at laſt we obtain every thing of Him by Perſeverance. II. *Finally*, We diſcover in this other Miracle of Healing the Deaf and Dumb Man, the Facility and Authority wherewith Chriſt cured all Sorts of Diſeaſes, and that great Charity which induced Him, upon all Occaſions, to comfort and aſſiſt the Miſerable, and to do good to all the World.

CHAP. VIII. 1,——20.

I. CHRIST feeds miraculouſly Four Thouſand Perſons. II. He refuſes to give a Sign, which the *Phariſees* require of Him. And, III. warns his Diſciples to beware of the Leaven of the *Phariſees*, and of *Herod*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TO make a right Uſe of what we have read, we ought, I. To admire the wonderful and gracious Manner wherewith our Lord fed ſeveral Thouſand Perſons; whereby he was pleaſed not only to provide for the Nouriſhment of their Bodies, but likewiſe to diſpoſe them to receive from Him the true Food, which is that of the Soul. This Miracle has one thing particular

ticular in it, namely, that a great Multitude of People were witneſſes to it, and ſenſible of its Effects; and that the Apoſtles were fully convinced of its certainty, by the Remnants of Bread wherewith they filled ſeven Baskets. II. We ſee that the *Phariſees* having deſired of our Saviour to ſhew them a Sign from Heaven, He would not gratifie them therein. His uſage of them in that Matter was very juſt, ſince that having already done ſo many other Miracles, of which they had made no Advantage, ſuch a Sign could have ſerved for nothing, nor would they be affected therewith. When God has done enough to convince Men, and to perſuade them that they reſiſt his Will, He is not bound to do any more, and it would be in vain for Him to employ new Means; ſo He juſtly leaves them to their Blindneſs and Unbelief. III. As for the Warning our Lord gave his Diſciples againſt the Leaven of the *Phariſees*, and the Leaven of *Herod*, who was of the Sect of the *Sadducees*, it was as much as to ſay, that they ſhould forſake the Doctrine of the *Phariſees*, who were Hypocrites, and only adhered to the Traditions and Externals of Religion; and the impious Opinions of the *Sadducees*, that denied the Reſurrection, and maintain'd other pernicious Errors. We ought to obſerve here, the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of Chriſt, who took an occaſion from his Diſciples forgetting to provide Bread for their Journey, to give them that Inſtruction. And this teaches us to avoid, with the utmoſt Care, all kinds of falſe Doctrines, and dangerous Notions, and eſpecially of ſuch as may lead us on one Hand to Superſtition and Hypocriſie; or, on the other, to Irreligion and Infidelity.

CHAP. VIII. 22,——33.

THIS Part of the eighth Chapter contains Four Heads. I. Chriſt cures a blind Man. II. He asks his Diſciples what Opinion the People had of Him, and what they themſelves thought of Him; whereupon St. *Peter* confeſſed Him to be the Son of God. III. Our Lord foretels his Death. IV. He exhorts his Diſciples to be prepared for Sufferings, and to make an open Profeſſion of the Goſpel before Men; to engage them to which, He ſhews them, that it was the only Means to avoid the Loſs of their Souls.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. IN the Healing of the blind Man, there is this particular, *viz.* That our Lord would not heal him all at once, but did it by degrees. He proceeded in that manner, to try his Faith, and to inflame his Zeal, to demonſtrate his Power to him in a more ſenſible Manner by the Progreſs of his Cure, and to let the People ſee, that in not working his Miracles after the ſame Manner always, He could diſplay the Divine Power that was in Him, either all at once, or by little and little; which ſhews, that He was Maſter of working Miracles, according as He thought convenient. II. We ſee in the ſecond Place, that Chriſt was eſteemed among the *Jews* as a great Prophet, but that St. *Peter* and the other Apoſtles look'd upon him as the Son of God. It is likewiſe what all of us ought to believe in our Heart, and confeſs with our Mouth, if we would be ſaved. Nevertheleſs, our Lord forbids his Diſciples to publiſh that He was the Meſſiah, becauſe He was not to take upon

on Him openly that Character before his Death. III. Upon the Prediction which Chriſt made of his own Death, it is to be obſerv'd, that He warned his Diſciples thereof, that they might be prepared gradually for that Event, and underſtand the Neceſſity of it. Upon which account it was, that He ſo ſeverely rebuked St. *Peter*, who being poſſeſs'd with the Jewiſh Prejudices, could not be perſuaded that the Meſſiah was to die. But what this Apoſtle could not comprehend at that Time, is plain to us, who know that the Death of Chriſt is the Means that God has been pleaſed to uſe for our Redemption. IV. And, *Laſtly*, Chriſt has now taught us, that thoſe who would be his Diſciples, muſt deny themſelves, and be prepared to ſuffer; that there is nothing of ſo great Importance to us, as to loſe or ſave our Souls; and that we ought to make an open Profeſſion of Godlineſs and Truth, if we would have Him own us for his Diſciples, and if we deſire to be received into his Glory when He comes to judge the World. Theſe are moſt wholſome Inſtructions, and powerful Motives to make us diſcharge the Duties of Chriſtianity. Let us beſeech the Lord that they may ſink deep into our Hearts. *Amen.*

CHAP. IX. 1,——29.

THIS Part of the ninth Chapter contains Three Things: I. The Transfiguration of *Jeſus Chriſt*. II. The Explanation which He gave to his Diſciples of the Prediction that *Elias* was to come firſt. III. The Healing of the Lunatick, whom the Apoſtles could not cure.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THIS is what we ſhould conſider upon the Transfiguration of our Lord: Namely, that He appeared in his Glory in the Preſence of his Apoſtles a little before his Death, that He might ſtrengthen their Faith, which was like to be ſhaken thereby, and fully convince them that He was the Son of God. The Apparition of *Moſes* and *Elias* ſhewed, that *Jeſus* was he of whom the Prophets had foretold the Coming, and that He far excelled the greateſt of the Prophets. The Voice which God cauſed to be heard from Heaven upon that occaſion, teaches us, that our Lord is that great Prophet, whom we are bound to hear, and likewiſe to obey. This Transfiguration of Chriſt is, as to the reſt, an image of the Glory wherein He ſhall appear at the laſt Day; and the Preſence of *Moſes* and *Elias* proves, that thoſe holy Men lived after their Death, and that there is a State of Happineſs reſerved for the Righteous after this Life. II. We may obſerve further, that *John* the Baptiſt is that *Elias* who was to come, according to the Prophecy of *Malachi*; and that the Name of *Elias* was given to him, becauſe, like that Prophet, he was to reform the Manners of Men, and to eſtabliſh the Service of God. This obliges us to acknowledge the Truth of the Prophetical Oracles, and the Dignity of the Perſon of *John* the Baptiſt, to reflect ſeriouſly upon the Deſign of his Miniſtry, and the Obligation we lie under to make a good Uſe thereof, and better than the *Jews* have done. III. In the Cure of the Lunatick, we may remark, that the Faith of the Apoſtles was as yet very weak; but that our Lord ſeeing the Condition of the young Man, and having reſpect

ſpect to the Faith and Tears of his Father, healed him. The chief Inſtruction this Example and Chriſt's Diſcourſe gives us, relates to the Efficacy and Neceſſity of Faith, as well as to that of Prayer and Faſting. Theſe Means being not leſs neceſſary to reſiſt Temptation, and to the good of our Souls, than they were formerly to work or obtain Miracles.

CHAP. IX. 30,——51.

I. OUR Lord warns his Diſciples of his approaching Death. II. He anſwers them, upon the Diſputes among themſelves, of who ſhould be the greateſt in the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, and teaches them Humility, by placing a little Child in the midſt of them. III. St. *John* having acquainted Him that they had ſeen a Man caſting out Devils in his Name, and that they had forbad him, becauſe he did not follow them; he told them, that they ought not to have oppoſed that Man, nor diſcourag'd any of thoſe that believed on Him. IV. He exhorts them, *Laſtly*, to avoid every thing that might be a Scandal, or an occaſion of Falling, either to themſelves or others, threatning ſuch as do not avoid Offences with the Pains of Hell, and He exhorts them to live together in Peace and Unity.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE muſt conſider what is ſaid here, namely, I. That the Apoſtles could not comprehend that our Lord was to die. And, II. The Diſpute that aroſe among themſelves, who ſhould be greateſt in the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, as an effect of the Opinion they had taken up, that his Kingdom ſhould be a Tempo-

ral Kingdom. Chriſt undeceiv'd them, by ſetting before them a little Child, the Deſign of which was, to inſpire them with humble Sentiments, and to teach them not to prefer themſelves to others, nor to deſpiſe any one. This Leſſon concerns all Chriſtians, who ought to baniſh from their Hearts all proud and haughty Thoughts, and to become like Children in Meekneſs, Innocence, and Humility. III. 'Tis in the ſame View that our Lord reproves his Diſciples, becauſe they hinder'd a Man who did not follow them, from caſting out Devils in the Name of *Jeſus Chriſt*. From thence we ought to learn, not to reject any of thoſe who make Profeſſion of loving the Lord, and believing in Him. This is what He ſhews yet more expreſly, by ſaying, that it is a very great Sin to deſpiſe or offend any of his Diſciples, even though they ſhould betray ſome Weakneſs, whereby they might appear contemptible to the World. IV. And *Laſtly*, our Saviour ſtrongly exhorts us, and with the ſevereſt Threatnings, to withſtand every thing that may cauſe us to Sin, to renounce bravely whatever is moſt dear to us, to mortifie our Inclinations, and even to undergo the greateſt Troubles, rather than to fall our ſelves, or to make others fall into Sin, and thereby expoſe our ſelves and them to be caſt into Hell, where the Worm does not die, nor is the Fire ever quenched.

CHAP. X. 1,——31.

CHRIST does Three Things: I. He anſwers the *Phariſees*, who diſcours'd with Him about Divorces, and told them, that the Cuſtom eſtabliſh'd among the *Jews*, of putting away a Man's Wife for all kinds of Reaſons, was con-

contrary to the Inſtitution of Marriage. II. He bleſſes young Children. III. He anſwers a rich young Man, who had asked Him what he muſt do to be ſaved; upon which occaſion He ſays, that Riches would hinder many People from believing in Him; but that He would abundantly reward thoſe that ſhould forſake their Goods, and all that was deareſt to them, to follow Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE may make this general Obſervation upon what our Saviour ſays about Divorces and Marriage: That Divorces, as they were practiſed by the *Jews*, was an irregularity which God did not approve, but which however was tolerated, becauſe of the carnal Humour of that People, and of their natural Inclination to Diſobedience; but that theſe Divorces ought not to be ſuffer'd among Chriſtians, no more than ſeveral other like Things which God bore with formerly. Chriſt teaches us afterwards, that the Laws of Marriage are inviolable, that they equally bind the Man and the Woman, and that He having ſettled them again upon the ſame Foot they were at the Beginning, nothing but Adultery can juſtifie a Divorce, and the Liberty of Marrying again. II. The Ceremony of Impoſition of Hands, which Chriſt practiſed with reſpect to little Children, and the Prayer He made for them, convinces us, that Children are dear to Him; that it is a Practice very conformable to his Mind, when we offer them to God by Baptiſm and Prayer; and that the Kingdom of Heaven is reſerved for thoſe who are Children in Innocence and Simplicity. III. We may learn from what paſſed between Chriſt and the rich young

Man, that to enter into Heaven, we muſt keep the Commandments of God; and that beſides, we ought ſometimes to forſake Goods, and all that we poſſeſs in this World; and that, in general, Chriſtians ought not to ſet their Heart upon Riches; and that if God beſtows them upon us, we ſhould employ them to charitable Purpoſes. We gather moreover from the Diſcourſe of our Lord, that this Renunciation of worldly Goods, as hard as it may ſeem at firſt, is not impoſſible, no more than our other Duties; and that thoſe who ſhall have thus renounced the good Things of this Life, as the Apoſtles did formerly, ſhall be abundantly rewarded both here and hereafter. *Laſtly*, The Example of the ſaid young Man, who had ſomething of Good in him, and for which Chriſt loved him, but who was ſcandaliſed and diſcourag'd when our Saviour told him, that he muſt diſpoſe of his Goods, ſhews, that it may happen, that People who have good Intentions, and ſome good Qualities, cannot get ſo far as to be ſaved; and that in particular, Riches are oftentimes great ſtumbling Blocks in their Way.

CHAP. X. 32,——53.

OUR Lord, I. warns his Diſciples of his Death and Reſurrection. II. Returns an Anſwer to *James* and *John*, who fancying, like the reſt of the *Jews*, that the Meſſiah was to have a glorious Reign upon Earth, begg'd of Him the chiefeſt Dignities in his Kingdom. III. He reſtores Sight to a blind Man near *Jericho*.

Reflexi-

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE may conſider here in the firſt Place, that the Time of Chriſt's Death drawing nigh, He revealed more plainly to his Apoſtles, that He was to be Crucified, and to riſe again, but that they could not comprehend it, becauſe they expected to ſee their Maſter Reign on Earth with Glory. In this we diſcover on one Hand, the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of our Lord, who was pleaſed thus to prepare his Diſciples for that which was to befal Him; and on the other Hand, that thoſe Diſciples did ſtill labour under great Prejudices; and that they knew not yet what He was to do to ſave Mankind. II. In the next Place, we muſt attend to what Chriſt ſaid to St. *James* and St. *John*, to convince them, that inſtead of expecting to be raiſed to great Employments, they would be called to drink of the ſame Cup, and to be baptized with the ſame Baptiſm as He was; that is to ſay, to paſs through very great Sufferings, and even to undergo Death it ſelf; and that therefore they ought to be humbled, and to become the Servants of one another, after the Example of their Lord, who came only into the World to ſuffer, and to ſave Men by his Death. Theſe Leſſons, and this great Example of Humility, concern us as well as the Apoſtles, and we ought to ſet them continually before us, as the Rule of our Sentiments and of our Behaviour. III. And, *Laſtly*, the Cure which our Lord granted to the blind Man, who implored his Aſſiſtance with ſo much fervour, is a freſh Proof of his Power and Goodneſs; and we may infer from it, that if He was ſo ready to aſſiſt the Unfortunate, He is yet more diſpoſed to ſave all ſuch as call upon Him with

Zeal

Zeal and Humility, and that ſeek of Him both Health and Life.

CHAP. XI.

I. JESUS CHRIST makes his Royal Entry into *Jeruſalem*. II. He drives out of the Temple thoſe that prophaned it, by ſelling Doves, and other Creatures, proper for the Sacrifices, and by Changing of Money. III. He cauſes the Fig-Tree to wither by his Word. And, IV. He anſwers the *Phariſees*, who required an Account of his Authority.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. IT is to be obſerved, that our Lord made his Royal Entry into *Jeruſalem* a few Days before his Death, to ſhew, that He was that glorious King, whoſe Coming the Prophets had promiſed, but which He avoided to declare publickly during his Life. But the Manner wherein He performed this Entry, riding upon a young Aſs, ſhewed his Meekneſs and Humility, and was a Token that his Kingdom was not of this World. Now as we do much better underſtand the Glory of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Nature of his Kingdom, than the People who waited on Him on that ſolemn Occaſion, we are the more ſtrongly engaged to rejoice and praiſe God for having ſent us this great Saviour, and for the Manifeſtation of his Kingdom. II. The Action of our Lord in driving out from the Temple thoſe that prophaned it, tended to make the *Jews* ſenſible of his Heavenly and Divine Authority; and it is likewiſe a Warning to us, that we ſhould not prophane, either by Hypocriſie, Impiety, or Irreverence, the Places where God is worſhipped and called upon.

upon. III. As for the Miracle of the wither'd Fig-Tree, Chriſt himſelf has taught us the End and Uſe thereof; which was to ſhew, that Faith and Prayer obtain all Things from God; but He likewiſe warns us, that Prayer muſt be made in the Spirit of Love, and that when we offer up our Prayers to God, we ſhould previouſly forgive one another. IV. The Anſwer our Lord returned to the *Phariſees*, who asked Him whence He had his Authority, was to convince them that their Blindneſs and Unbelief were wilful, and that his Authority proceded from Heaven, as well as that of *John* the Baptiſt; but we ſhould be yet more guilty than thoſe *Phariſees*, if knowing that *John* the Baptiſt and *Jeſus Chriſt* were ſent from God, and profeſſing to believe the ſame, we ſhould not ſubmit our ſelves to the Doctrine which they preached, and above all, to the Authority of the Son of God, our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*.

CHAP. XII. 1,——27.

I. CHRIST propoſes the Parable of the Husbandmen. II. Anſwers the Queſtion that was put to Him about paying Tribute to the Emperor. And, III. another Queſtion which the *Sadducees* ask'd Him about the Reſurrection.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Meaning of the Parable of the Husbandmen is, that the *Jews*, after having rejected and perſecuted the Prophets, would put to Death the Son of God, for which Reaſon God would take away his Covenant from them, and deſtroy them, that He would cauſe the Goſpel to be preach'd to the *Gentiles*, and

and that Chriſt, who had been rejected by the chief among the *Jews*, ſhould become the Head and King of the Church. There are Two Reflexions may be made upon this Parable: The *firſt* is, That all that *Jeſus* had foretold, was fulfilled ſoon after by the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, by the Calling of the *Gentiles*, and by the Eſtabliſhment of the Kingdom of our Lord. The *ſecond*, That God will not fail to puniſh the Ingratitude and Unbelief of thoſe that ſhall have deſpiſed the Goſpel, and that don't bring forth the Fruits of Godlineſs and Holineſs which He requires of them. II. We may ſee by the Anſwer that Chriſt made concerning the Tribute, that He diſcover'd the Snare which the *Phariſees* laid for Him, and avoided it, by ſaying to them, *Render unto Ceſar the Things that are Ceſar's, and unto God, the Things that are God's.* From hence we ſhould gather, that we are bound to ſubmit to the Authority of Kings and Princes, and to yield them all that is due to them, and likewiſe to acquit our ſelves inviolably of thoſe Duties to which we are bound by our Religion to pay to God. III. And, *Laſtly*, we ſee how our Lord confounded the *Sadducees*, who denied the Reſurrection of the Dead. This Paſſage is very remarkable, Chriſt teaches us here, the Truth of the Reſurrection, and the State of thoſe that ſhall riſe again; which ought to ſtrengthen us in the Belief of this great and comfortable Truth, and induce us to imitate the Faith and Piety of the Patriarchs, of whom the Lord has declar'd himſelf to be their God, even after their Death; and it ſhould likewiſe teach us to live after a pure and ſpiritual manner, to the end, that we may partake of the Glory of a happy Reſurrection.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII. 28,——44.

THIS Part of the Twelfth Chapter includes Four Heads. I. Chriſt anſwers one of the *Scribes*, who asked Him which was the greateſt Commandment. II. He asks the *Phariſees*, how the Meſſiah could be at the ſame time the Son and Lord of *David*. III. He condemns the Hypocriſie of the *Scribes*. IV. He praiſes the Offering of a poor Widow.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have here, I. a very important Leſſon, namely, That the chief Commandment, and that which includes all the reſt, is to love God with all our Heart, and to love our Neighbour as our ſelves; that this is all we can do moſt acceptable to God, and that it is worth more than all the Ceremonies, and all the external Duties of Religion. For which Reaſon we ought to labour above all Things to fix in our Hearts this Love of God and of our Neighbour. II. We ought to obſerve, that our Lord, in asking the *Phariſees* how the Meſſiah could be the Son of *David*, was minded to make them ſenſible of their Ignorance, but would not explain the Queſtion which they could not anſwer, becauſe they would not have believed what He ſaid to them, and becauſe He would not then ſpeak openly of the Dignity of his Perſon; but this Queſtion has nothing obſcure in it with reſpect to us, ſince we know Chriſt is the Son of *David*, becauſe as Man he is deſcended from him, but that He was his Lord as the Son of God, which obliges us to believe that He is really the *Meſſiah*, and to obey Him. III. The Reproaches that Chriſt

Chriſt made to the *Scribes*, ſhew us, that Pride, Hypocriſie, and Covetouſneſs, are moſt odious Vices, eſpecially in thoſe that teach others. IV. The Judgment which our Lord paſſed upon the Offering of a poor Widow, that caſt two little Pieces of Money into a Cheſt, where they kept that which was given for the Uſe of the Temple, and for Divine Service, is a Proof that God does chiefly regard the Heart and Intention; and that the Contributions and Alms of poor People, though they are of little Value, are as well received as thoſe of the Rich, when the Poor give as much as their Poverty will allow them, and when they do it out of a Principle of Piety and Charity.

CHAP. XIII.

I. CHRIST ſpeaks of the Signs that were to precede the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the End of the World. He ſays there would ariſe falſe Prophets, and falſe Meſſiahs; that there would be Wars, Famines, and all ſort of Calamities; that his Diſciples would be perſecuted, and the Goſpel preached throughout the World. He foretels them, that the Idolaters ſhould enter into *Judea*, and beſiege *Jeruſalem*; that there would appear every where Tokens of the Wrath of God; that then the Son of Man would manifeſt Himſelf in his Glory; and that theſe Things ſhould happen before that Generation paſſed away. II. He exhorts his Diſciples to depart from *Jeruſalem* at that time, to hold themſelves ready, and to watch for his Coming; and to induce them thereto, ſays, that the Time of ſuch his Coming was uncertain.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Diſcourſe of the Son of God offers to our Mind three principal Reflexions. I. That the Event did fully verifie all theſe Predictions of our Lord ſoon after He left the World, foraſmuch as ſeveral Deceivers or Impoſtors appear'd in that Age; the *Jews* were afflicted with War, and all kind of Scourges; the Apoſtles and Chriſtians were perſecuted; the Goſpel ſpread in ſeveral Parts of the World; *Jeruſalem* beſieged and deſtroy'd by the *Romans*, and the Chriſtians that came out of it preſerv'd from that Deſolation; and, *Laſtly*, that all theſe Things happen'd before all the Men that lived in Chriſt's Time were dead, as He had poſitively foretold. All theſe are ſo many undeniable Proofs of the Truth and Divinity of the Goſpel, and viſible Tokens of the Divine Vengeance upon the *Jews*. II. This ought to convince us, that what Chriſt ſaid no leſs poſitively about his laſt Coming, about the End of the World, the univerſal Judgment, and the Puniſhment of wicked Men, ſhall not fail to come to paſs. III. The third Reflexion is, that the time of this Coming is unknown to us, as well as the time of our own Death, God having conceal'd it from us out of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs; that therefore we ought to think upon it continually, and to prepare our ſelves for it by Prayers, by a pure Life, and by the Practice of all kind of good Works, ſerving God faithfully every one in his Calling, to the end that we be not ſurprized by that terrible Day. This is what our Lord himſelf exhorts us to by the following Expreſſions, which occur at the end of his Diſcourſe, and which ſhew the Uſe and Deſign thereof: *Take heed to your ſelves, watch and*

pray,

pray, for you know not when your Lord will come, and what I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.

CHAP. XIV. 1,——31.

ST. *Mark* begins here the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Paſſion, and relates, I. How a Woman anointed Him with a precious Oil. II. How *Judas* promiſed the *Jews* to betray his Maſter to them. III. The Celebration of the Paſſover the Evening before his Death; and how, during Supper, He foretold the Treachery of *Judas*, and the Denial of Him by St. *Peter*, and the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper.

Reflexions after the Reading.

LET us attend and meditate with great ſeriouſneſs upon the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Paſſion, and all its Circumſtances. I. The firſt is the Action of that Woman, who poured on Him a precious Ointment. Since Chriſt commended that Action, and declared that the Remembrance of it ſhould be perpetuated in the Church, we are obliged to take a particular notice of it, and to conſider, that as our Lord commended the Zeal and good Intentions of that Woman, He will likewiſe approve all that we ſhall do for his Honour; it likewiſe teaches us to avoid raſh Judgments, and not to blame haſtily and too eaſily the Actions of other People, when they may proceed from a good Principle; and that we ought to take care of the Poor, and embrace every Opportunity of doing Good to them. II. The Example of *Judas* ſhews, that Covetouſneſs blinds and hardens Men to ſuch a degree, that it puts them upon committing all ſort of Crimes. III. Since Chriſt foretold the

Treaſon

Treaſon of *Judas*, it appear'd from thence, that nothing was concealed from Him, that He knew the Hearts and Deſigns of Men, that He foreſaw what was to happen to Him, and conſequently, that all his Sufferings were voluntary. IV. Chriſt celebrated the Paſſover with his Diſciples, according to the Cuſtom of the *Jews*, to ſhew, that He ſtrictly obſerved every thing that was preſcribed by the Law of God; but He chiefly did it, becauſe his Deſign was to ordain the holy Supper, and to ſubſtitute it to the *Jewiſh* Paſſover. This ought to inſpire us with a very great reſpect for this Divine Ceremony, which our Lord has eſtabliſh'd as a Memorial of his Death, and to engage us to celebrate it with Faith and Thankſgiving, conformably to his Intentions. *Finally*, The Prediction that St. *Peter* ſhould deny Him, ſuppoſes our Lord to have an entire Knowledge of the Heart of Man; and what He ſaid to that Apoſtle, who vowed he would never forſake Him, ought to fill us with a wholſome Diſtruſt of our ſelves, and induce us to improve the Warnings which God gives us, and to ſeek in Humility, in Watching, and in Prayers, for that Conſtancy and Courage, ſo neceſſary to ſecure us againſt all the Surpriſes of Temptation.

CHAP. XIV. 32,——52.

ST. *Mark* relates here, I. What Chriſt ſuffered in the Garden. II. How He was taken by the *Jews*, who were led by *Judas*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE extream Anguiſh which our Lord felt in the Garden, is one of the moſt remarkable Circumſtances of his Paſſion. It diſcovers very plainly to us, that He ſuffered to atone for the Sins of Mankind; and we may judge from thence, how great is the Horror of Sin, and with what Deſpair the Wicked will be ſeiz'd when they undergo the Puniſhment due to their Sins. We ought next, in Imitation of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who, in his Agony, pray'd with ſo much Fervour, and with ſo perfect a Submiſſion to the Will of his Father, to call upon God with Perſeverance when we are under Affliction, and at the ſame time, with an entire Reſignation to his Will, ſaying, *Lord, not what I will, but what Thou wilt.* Let us likewiſe make a good Uſe of that Exhortation which *Jeſus Chriſt* gave to his Apoſtles: *Watch and pray, leſt you enter into Temptation; the Spirit truly is ready, but the Fleſh is weak.* Chriſt aſſures us thereby, that the infallible Means not to fall into Sin, is to diſtruſt our own Weakneſs, and to watch and pray; but that we are drawn away by Temptations, as ſoon as ever we neglect theſe Means. II. By the Narration of the Manner in which our Lord was taken, and by what He then ſaid to *Judas*, and to the *Jews*, it appears plainly that He was not taken and condemn'd but through his own free Will, and by the Permiſſion of Almighty God; this is another powerful Inducement for us to love our Saviour moſt fervently, who has been pleaſed to expoſe himſelf thus freely to Death for our ſakes, and engage us to acquieſce and ſubmit to the Will of the Lord in all Things. The Action of St. *Peter*, who wounded the Servant of the High Prieſt, being

being driven thereto by his Reſentment and inconſiderate Zeal, is an Example for us, to abſtain from Violence and Revenge, and to imitate in all Things that perfect Pattern of Meekneſs and Patience, our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt.*

CHAP. XIV. 53,——72.

THE Evangeliſt relates here, I. That which paſſed when our Saviour appeared before the Council of the *Jews*, and his Condemnation thereupon. And, II. the Fall of St. *Peter.*

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Reflexions that we are to make upon all that paſſed in the Council when our Lord was brought before it, relates, I. To the unjuſt and cruel Proceedings of the *Jews.* II. To the perfect Innocence of Chriſt, who could not be convicted of any Crime, notwithſtanding all the Pains which his Enemies took to find out Accuſations and falſe Witneſſes againſt Him. III. That great Meekneſs, and that Spirit of Humility and Patience, which our Lord manifeſted by his Diſcourſes, and by ſuffering all the Indignities they put upon Him. In all theſe Things He has left us very ſenſible Proofs of his Submiſſion to the Will of his Father, and of his Love towards us, and a Pattern of Patience, to which we ought to conform our ſelves. IV. We have likewiſe ſeen how our Lord owned that He was the Son of God, though that Confeſſion was to be the Cauſe of his Death; and it is thus that we are always obliged to confeſs the Truth, and to give Glory to God, even at the Peril of our Lives, when we are call'd thereto. V. It is next to be obſerved,

ſerved, what Chriſt ſaid to the *Jews* at the time of his Condemnation, *viz.* That they ſhould ſoon ſee Tokens of his Power, by which it would be made appear what He was. This was fulfilled quickly after, when the *Jews* were deſtroy'd, and when they ſaw the Kingdom of our Lord eſtabliſh'd in the World. VI. We ought alſo to improve, to our own Advantage, the Fall of St. *Peter*, who denied his Maſter after ſuch a ſolemn Proteſtation that he would never forſake Him. Every Body, and even thoſe Perſons who abound with Zeal and good Intentions, may learn from hence, how great our Weakneſs is, and that we ought to be upon our guard againſt Temptation, by avoiding the Occaſions of Sin; and the Repentance of this Apoſtle, which was ſo ſpeedy and ſo bitter, teaches us, that when we ſtumble or make any fall, we ought to riſe immediately, to have a lively ſorrow for it, and to repair it by recourſe to the Mercy of God, and by true Repentance.

CHAP. XV. 1,—15.

CHRIST is brought before *Pilate*, who, after having endeavour'd to deliver Him, conſents at laſt to his Death.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN that which paſſed before *Pilate*, there are Four chief Things to be obſerv'd. I. The Injuſtice and Rage of the *Jews*, which nothing could appeaſe, and who ſo earneſtly ſollicited the Condemnation of *Jeſus*, even ſo far, as to prefer a Murtherer before Him. II. The Humility, Silence, and Patience of our Lord, who ſubmitted Himſelf to the Judgment of *Pilate*, and

and underwent, without Complaining, all the unrighteous Treatment done to Him. Theſe are ſtrong Proofs of his Love for Men, whom He deſir'd to ſave; and of his Submiſſion to the Will of his Father; and it is likewiſe an Example of Reſignation for ſuch as are expos'd to Sufferings, or to the Iniquity of Men. III. It is to be obſerv'd, that the Innocence of Chriſt was fully acknowledg'd by *Pilate*, which aggravated the Guilt of the *Jews*, as well as that of the Governour. IV. And, *Laſtly*, that that unjuſt Judge, after having refus'd to do what the *Jews* required, and after having endeavour'd to ſave the Life of Chriſt, did at length himſelf pronounce the Sentence of Death againſt Him. *Pilate* is an inſtance of thoſe that ſin againſt Light, who, after having reſiſted Temptation for a while, do yield to it, and who, for the fear of Men, and out of Views of Policy and Intereſt, or for ſome other Principle of the like Nature, do what their own Conſcience condemns; whereas good Men do always adhere to their Duty, and purſue with ſteadineſs the Dictates of their Heart, without turning aſide for any conſideration whatever.

CHAP. XV. 16,——47.

THE Hiſtory of the Crucifixion, Death, and Burial of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have heard the Hiſtory of our Lord's Paſſion, in which we are chiefly to conſider the Torments of that cruel Puniſhment He underwent, the Shame and Ignominy to which He was expoſed, by being

Crucified between two Thieves, the Outrages and Inſults which the *Phariſees* and Prieſts offer'd to Him whilſt He was faſten'd to the Croſs; and, *Laſtly*, the Death which put an end to his Sufferings. We diſcover in all this, the profound Humiliation of the Son of God, the great Love that He has ſhewn for us, and the Example of moſt perfect Patience. Wherefore we ought to look upon this Death as the Price of our Redemption, and the Support of our Faith; to love this good Saviour, who has ſo much loved us; to renounce Sin, which He came to deſtroy by his Death; and to learn from Him to bear our Croſs, and to ſuffer patiently when we are called thereto. The Hiſtory of Chriſt's Burial, and the Enquiries of *Pilate* before he would grant his Body to *Joſeph*, prove that He really died, and conſequently, that He really roſe again. The Conſideration of this Burial is likewiſe very proper to diſperſe the Fear that we may entertain of Death, and of the Grave, and to raiſe our Minds to the Expectation of a better Life.

CHAP. XVI.

IN this laſt Chapter of St. *Mark*, we ſee, I. The Hiſtory of the Reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt*. II. The Orders He gave his Apoſtles before He left the World. And, III. His Aſcenſion.

Reflexi-

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we have read, eſtabliſhes, I. The Truth and Certainty of the Reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſince it was confirmed by the Apparition and Teſtimony of the Angels, and that our Lord was ſeen firſt by the Women that went to his Sepulchre, and afterwards by the Apoſtles at ſeveral Times. We ought to conſider next, how glorious this Reſurrection was, God having been pleaſed to ſend Angels to open the Tomb of our Lord, and to declare to Men that He was riſen again. This wonderful Event proves therefore, that *Jeſus* was the Son of God, and is an aſſurance to us, that He has perfectly reconciled us to God by the Sacrifice of Himſelf, and that He has overcome Death and the Grave. This Reſurrection is likewiſe a certain earneſt of our own, which ought to fill us with comfort and confidence, and powerfully excite us to Holineſs. II. The Commands that Chriſt left with his Apoſtles, to go Preaching and Baptizing throughout the World, and the Power wherewith He armed them to work all ſorts of Miracles, ſhew, that He ſpake as King of the Church, and Lord of all Things; and the Event agreeing with what He had ſaid, does undeniably prove, that He is exalted to a ſupreme Power, and that the Goſpel is a divine and heavenly Doctrine. We may obſerve particularly, that Chriſt ſpeaks of Baptiſm after ſuch a manner, as proves that this Ceremony is of Divine Inſtitution; But that He declares at the ſame time, that Baptiſm will not ſave us, unleſs it be attended with a true Faith. III. And,

Laſtly, The Aſcenſion of Chriſt obliges us to conſider Him as one, who has the Sovereign Authority over all Things, and who muſt be our Judge. And ſince He is likewiſe gone to Heaven, to prepare a Place for us there, we may aſpire and endeavour, by Holineſs and by good Works, to that glorious Manſion into which our Redeemer is enter'd, and where He is ſeated at the right Hand of God. May He Himſelf give us that Grace, and to Him be the Glory for ever. *Amen.*

St. LUKE.

CHAP. I. 1,——15.

THE Goſpel of St. *Luke* was written about Twenty Years after the Aſcenſion of *Jeſus Chriſt*. The Author of this Goſpel is St. *Luke*, who was the Diſciple and Companion of St. *Paul*, and followed him in his Travels. This part of the firſt Chapter contains the Annunciation of the Birth of *John* the Baptiſt.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we have here read, relates, I. To the Birth of *John* the Baptiſt. And, II. to his Miniſtry. As to his Birth, it may be obſerv'd, that there was ſomething extraordinary and ſupernatural in it, ſince he proceded from a Father advanced in Years, and from a Mother that was old and barren; that God declared this Birth by an Angel; and that *Zachariah* the Father, who could not believe

it,

it, was aſſured of it by a Miracle, which God wrought in ſtriking him Dumb. All which tended to ſhew, that *John* the Baptiſt was an extraordinary Perſon, and ſent from God; and this Birth was likewiſe a Type and Prelude of that of *Jeſus Chriſt*, which would be yet more miraculous, ſince He was to be born of a Virgin. As to the Miniſtry of *John* the Baptiſt, we ought ſeriouſly to conſider what the Angel ſaid to *Zachariah*, to reveal to him what his Son was to be one Day; namely, that he would be filled with the Holy Ghoſt, that he would be great before the Lord, and that, like another *Elias*, he would bring Men back to God, and to the Life of the Righteous, by the Severity of his own Life, by his Authority, by his great Zeal, and by the Strength of his Exhortations; and that by this Means he would prepare them to receive the Meſſiah, of whom he was to be the Forerunner. Let us gather from thence this important Leſſon, that the Deſign of God in ſending *John* the Baptiſt, and afterwards *Jeſus Chriſt*, was for the Converſion of Mankind, for the withdrawing them from their Sins, and for making them a holy People, and given to good Works.

CHAP. I. 26,——56.

WHAT we are about to read, contains, I. The Annunciation of the Angel *Gabriel* to the bleſſed Virgin. II. The Viſit ſhe made to *Elizabeth*. III. Her Song of Praiſe.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. IN that which the Angel ſaid to the Virgin *Mary*, when he acquainted her that ſhe was to be the Mother of *Jeſus Chriſt*, we may

may chiefly remark these two Things: One, that the Body of our Lord was to be formed of the Substance of the Virgin by the Operation of the Holy Ghost; and the other, that this *Jesus*, who was to be born of *Mary*, would be the Son of God, that He would be exalted to very great Glory, and that He would reign eternally. From whence we may collect, that the Birth of Christ was miraculous, and altogether holy; that He did really assume our Nature, and become Man; but likewise that He was perfectly holy, and separated from Sinners, which proves, that He is the Son of God and the promised Messiah. II. We find in the next Place, that tho' the blessed Virgin would at first scarce believe what the Angel told her, yet she did not doubt but what had been declared to her from God, would certainly come to pass; and that she was confirmed in it by the Visit that she made her Cousin *Elizabeth*, the Mother of *John* the Baptist, who had likewise miraculously conceiv'd; upon which Occasion, III. she returned Praises to God by the Song related in this Chapter. All this shews the Faith, the Piety, and Humility of the Virgin *Mary*. We may observe particularly in her Song, how she was transported with Joy, from the Sense of the Favour that God had done her to be the Mother of the Messiah. We discover therein a profound Humility, a lively Gratitude, and at the same time a firm Belief that God was about to deliver his People, and to fulfil the Promises He had made them of sending the Redeemer. When we read this Relation, we ought to celebrate the Happiness of the Virgin as she her self has describ'd it; to imitate her Piety, her Humility, her Faith, and her other Virtues; we should abase our selves before God as she did, under the Sense of

his

his Mercies, and of our own Unworthineſs, and, with her alſo, praiſe Him above all things, for having ſent into the World Chriſt our Saviour, according to the Promiſes He had formerly made.

CHAP. I. 57,——80.

WHAT we are now about to read contains, I. The Hiſtory of *John* the Baptiſt. And, II. The Song of his Father *Zachariah*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THESE are the Reflexions which we ought to make, I. Upon the Birth of *John* the Baptiſt. And, II. Of the Song of *Zachariah*: We have ſeen how this Birth was attended with ſeveral very remarkable Circumſtances, namely, that *Zachariah* did then recover his Speech by a Miracle; that the Rumour of his Son's Birth was ſpread every where; and that all People impatiently expected what that Child would be one Day. All theſe Events were the Diſpenſations of Providence, that the *Jews* might be prepared to look upon *John* the Baptiſt as one ſent from God, to receive his Preaching, and to believe the Witneſs which he was to bear concerning *Jeſus Chriſt*. In the Song which *Zachariah* did then pronounce, by the Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, we may obſerve theſe three Things: *Firſt*, His Joy, his Gratitude, and the Thanks he returned to God for his being about to deliver his People. *Secondly*, His Faith, ſince he was convinced that the Meſſiah was about to appear, and that the Son which was born to Him, would be the Forerunner. *Thirdly*, *Zachariah* ſhews

ſhews in this Chapter the Deſign of Chriſt's Coming, when he ſays, *That we being delivered from the Hands of our Enemies, might ſerve* God *without fear, in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, all the Days of our Life.* This ſhould ſtir us up to bleſs God with *Zachariah*, for having ſaved us by *Jeſus Chriſt*, and to extol his Mercy, as well as his Faithfulneſs and the Truth of his Promiſes. And ſince our Lord is come to conſecrate us to the Service of God, 'tis our Duty to anſwer the Deſign of his Coming, by ſerving God faithfully, and by living in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs the whole Time of our Lives. God grant us Grace ſo to do.

CHAP. II. 1——20.

WE have here the Hiſtory of the Birth of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt Reflexion we are to make upon the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Birth is, that the Meſſiah being to be born at *Bethlehem*, according to the Prophecies, Providence guided the bleſſed Virgin from *Galilee*, where ſhe dwelt, to that City, by means of the Decree of the Emperor *Auguſtus*, who had order'd an Account to be taken of the Number of all his Subjects, and that therefore every one ſhould reſort to the Place of his Birth. II. That our Lord was born in very mean and poor Circumſtances, God being pleas'd as it were to declare thereby before hand, that Chriſt was not to live in Pomp and Glory, and that his Kingdom would not be of this World. III. That this Birth, which was ſo obſcure and lowly, was render'd illuſtrious by the Apparition of the Angels,

who

who denounced it to the Shepherds, and by the Song of thoſe bleſſed Spirits. It pleaſed God moreover, that the Shepherds ſhould go to *Bethlehem* to ſee the Child *Jeſus*, and to inform the holy Virgin of all the Wonders they had ſeen and heard, and then that they ſhould publiſh them all abroad, to the end, that the Expectation of the *Jews* might be excited and prepared for the Reception of *Jeſus Chriſt*. All theſe Events ought to ſtrengthen our Faith, and fill us with Joy and Comfort; we ought eſpecially to join our Praiſes to thoſe of the Shepherds and holy Angels, and bleſs God with them, that a Saviour is born unto us; and by this Birth, Peace has been given to the Earth, and the good Will of God ſo clearly manifeſted towards Men.

CHAP. II. 21,——52.

ST. *Luke* relates, I. The Circumciſion of Chriſt, the Preſenting Him to the Temple, and the Thankſgivings thereupon by *Simeon*, and *Anna* the Propheteſs. II. He recites, in the next Place, how Chriſt, being Twelve Years old, was found in the Temple in the midſt of the Doctors.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may conſider, I. in relation to what is here ſaid about the Circumciſion of Chriſt, his Preſentation to the Temple, the Purification of the Virgin, and the Offering which ſhe made according to Cuſtom, that God thought fit that all theſe Things ſhould be obſerved, even after the Birth of our Lord, becauſe they were preſcribed by the Law. II. The Joy which *Simeon*, and *Anna* the Propheteſs,

teſs, ſhewed at that time, and the Praiſes which they publickly gave to God, are an Argument, that the Birth of Chriſt is the moſt happy and the moſt ſalutary Event that ever came to paſs, and that therefore we ought to have very joyful Sentiments thereof, and inceſſantly to bleſs the Lord for them. We ought to do it the rather, becauſe what *Simeon* ſaid in his Song, has been accompliſhed in us, and becauſe we are ſome of thoſe *Gentiles*, to whom the Meſſiah was to be the Light and the Glory. III. What *Simeon* ſaid to the bleſſed Virgin, of the Glory of her Son, as well as of the Contradictions and Sufferings to which He ſhould be expoſed, tended to convince her, that the Kingdom of Chriſt would not be a Temporal Kingdom, and to prepare her to ſee Him rejected by the *Jews*, and put to Death. As for us, we ought to learn from thence, that our Saviour was to be receiv'd by ſome, and rejected by others; and that if his Coming be wholſome to ſuch as receive Him with Faith, it is an occaſion of Scandal and Deſtruction to Unbelievers. IV. That which happen'd to Chriſt at the Age of Twelve Years, when He was found in the Temple in the midſt of the Doctors, ſhews, that there appear'd in Him, even from his earlieſt Youth, extraordinary Underſtanding, Wiſdom, and Zeal, and that He was to be one day endow'd with the Spirit of God in a rich and abundant Meaſure. God was pleaſed thereby to begin to make Him known to the *Jews*, and to diſpoſe them to profit by his Miniſtry when He ſhould exerciſe it among them.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THIS Chapter contains Three Things. I. The Preaching of *John* the Baptiſt. II. The Baptiſm of *Jeſus Chriſt*. And, III. his Genealogy.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. *Luke* informs us here, I. That before the Appearance of our Lord, *John* the Baptiſt was ſent, as had been foretold by the Prophets, to prepare the *Jews* for his Reception: This he did, by Preaching Repentance, and by exhorting the People to believe on Him who was to come ſoon after; by Baptizing thoſe that receiv'd his Doctrine, and by threatning the unbelieving and impenitent *Jews*, that altho' they were the Children of *Abraham*, they ſhould not eſcape the Wrath to come, and that God would raiſe up other Children to *Abraham*, even from the Stones; which denoted that the *Gentiles* ſhould be called in their ſtead. All this tended to make the *Jews* underſtand, that the Kingdom of the Meſſiah was about to be manifeſted; but that it was to be a Spiritual, and not a Temporal Kingdom, as they expected; and that no Body would have any Share in the Advantages of that Kingdom, but ſuch as ſhould give themſelves up to Holineſs, and to Virtue. Theſe Inſtructions concern us as well as the *Jews*; they ſhew, that without Amendment of Life we cannot be the Diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt*; that an outward Appearance of Zeal, and an external Engagement in the Divine Covenant, ſignifies nothing; but that we muſt ſhew in reality, and by our Works, the Sincerity of our Faith and Repentance;

tance; and that harden'd and obſtinate Sinners ſhall no more eſcape divine Vengeance than the Hypocrites. Beſides this, the ſeveral Counſels that *John* Baptiſt gave the People, the Publicans and the Soldiers, ſhew us, that every one ought faithfully to diſcharge the Duties of his Calling, and to avoid thoſe Sins in which it may engage us; particularly, that we ought to exerciſe Charity, and to renounce Covetouſneſs, Injuſtice, Violence, and Fraud. II. What we are to conſider about the Baptiſm of *Jeſus Chriſt* is, that God thought fit He ſhould be baptized by *John*, and that upon this Occaſion the Holy Ghoſt came down upon Him, and a Voice was heard from Heaven, to the end that *John* the Baptiſt himſelf, the *Jews*, and all the People, might conſider our Lord as the Son of God, and as Him whom they ought to obey. III. As for what relates to the Genealogy of *Jeſus Chriſt*, as it is here related by St. *Luke*, we muſt obſerve, that it differs from that of St. *Matthew*, becauſe the latter gives us the Genealogy of *Joſeph*, the Husband of the holy Virgin, by *Solomon*, the Son of King *David*; whereas the former deduces the Virgin's Pedigree by *Nathan*, who was likewiſe a Son of *David*; but both of them agree in making our Lord to be deſcended from King *David* and the Patriarch *Abraham*, which was one of the Characters of the Meſſiah.

CHAP. IV. 1,——15.

THE Evangeliſt gives us here, I. The Hiſtory of our Saviour's Temptation. And, II. how he began the Exercise of his Miniſtry in *Galilee*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. TO underſtand aright the Hiſtory of the Temptation, which is the chief Thing to be conſider'd here, we muſt know, that when it is ſaid, the Devil tempted *Jeſus*, it ought to be underſtood thus: That he had a Mind to try whether *Jeſus* was the Son of God; and that God permitted Him to be thus tempted, before He began to preach the Goſpel, and to work Miracles, to the end, that the Devil being convinc'd that *Jeſus* was really the Son of God, he might revere his Power, and obey his Commands, when afterwards He ſhould drive out Devils from ſuch as were poſſeſs'd by them. The End therefore of this Temptation or Trial was, to ſhew that our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* is the Son of God, and that He came into the World to deſtroy the Kingdom of the Devil. To this general Conſideration, we may add two particular ones: The firſt is, That, according to the Example of Chriſt, we ſhould reſiſt all Temptations, and eſpecially ſuch as lead us to Diſtruſt, or to Preſumption, or to the Love of Glory, and the good Things of this World; or, *Laſtly*, to tempt God by a raſh Confidence. II. The ſecond Conſideration relates to the Means of reſiſting Temptations. The Retreat of *Jeſus Chriſt* into the Wilderneſs, his Faſting, and the Manner in which He repelled the Aſſaults of the Devil by the holy Scripture, teaches us, that Retirement, Faſting, Prayer, and the Word of God, are the moſt efficacious Methods to overcome Temptation, and to defeat the Attempts of the Enemies of our Salvation.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV. 16,——44.

I. OUR Lord being at *Nazareth*, on a Sabbath-Day, in the Synagogue, read a Prophecy of *Iſaiah*, which denoted that God would ſend the Meſſiah, and that He would fill Him with his Spirit, to declare to Men the joyful Tidings of Salvation; and He ſhewed that that Prophecy was fulfilled in his Perſon. Then He reproached the Inhabitants of that City with their Unbelief, which did ſo exaſperate them, that they would have thrown Him down headlong from a Precipice, but He eſcap'd their Fury. II. He went from thence to *Capernaum*, where He healed a Man poſſeſs'd by the Devil, as alſo the Mother in Law of St. *Peter*, and ſeveral other diſeaſed Perſons; and went through *Galilee*, working Miracles, and preaching the Goſpel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt Reflexion that this Reading offers to our Minds is, that Chriſt having been filled with the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, and having declared to Men the bleſſed Tidings of Salvation, the Prophecy of *Iſaiah*, which is related in this Chapter, was fulfilled in Him. As for the Diſcourſe which our Lord made in the Synagogue of *Nazareth*, this is the Meaning and Deſign thereof: *Jeſus* was deſirous to make the Inhabitants of that City, among whom He had been brought up, ſenſible that their Infidelity was the Cauſe that He did not work the ſame Miracles among them as He had elſewhere; in the ſame manner as formerly *Elijah* and *Eliſha* had wrought Miracles in favour of Strangers, preferably to thoſe of their own

Nation. The Uſe we ought to make of this is, that God deprives thoſe of his Grace and wholſome Preſence, who render themſelves unworthy of it, and who having the Preaching of the Goſpel in the midſt of them, do not make any Advantage of it. In the Reſolution which the Inhabitants of *Nazareth* took, to throw down Chriſt from a Precipice, we ſee the Proofs of that Infidelity whereof He reproached them, and of their Ingratitude; but it may be likewiſe obſerved, that they could not execute their Deſign, Chriſt having eſcaped their Fury, his Hour being not yet come. II. The ſeveral Miracles that are related about the End of this Chapter, and by which our Lord began to make Himſelf known in *Galilee*, and the Care He took to paſs through the Towns of that Country, declaring the Goſpel, are ſo many Proofs of his great Zeal, of his unlimitted Power, of the Charity wherewith He was animated towards Mankind, and of the Divinity of his Doctrine.

CHAP. V. 1,——16.

WE have here, I. The Relation of a wonderful Fiſhing, which Chriſt cauſed St. *Peter* to make. II. The Healing of a Leper, and of divers other diſeaſed Perſons.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE ought to obſerve and admire the Power of Chriſt, as well as the Wiſdom, in the wonderful Fiſhing, of which we have read the Hiſtory. He wrought this Miracle, to confirm St. *Peter* and ſome of his Companions in the Vocation to the Office of an Apoſtle, and to aſſure them, that their Miniſtry would

would produce great Fruits. And this Miracle ought to make ſo much the greater Impreſſion on them, as our Lord did it in a Matter that related to their own Buſineſs, as they were Fiſhers, whereby they were made the more ſenſible of the greatneſs thereof; and it did accordingly produce ſuch an effect in the Mind of St. *Peter*, who was ſeiz'd with Admiration, Reſpect, and Fear, at the Sight of what had happen'd; and who, as well as his Companions, St. *James* and St. *John*, forſook every thing forthwith to follow our Lord. II. In the Cure of the Leper, there are theſe Two Things to be obſerv'd, *viz.* That it was by his Faith and Prayers that he was made Whole; and that our Lord ſent him to the Prieſt, and commanded him to offer that which was order'd by the Law of *Moſes* in the like Caſe. He did this, the better to prove the Certainty of the Miracle He had wrought, to convince the Prieſts themſelves thereof, and to ſhew, that He obſerved all that God had commanded in the Law. *Finally*, This Miracle, as well as the other wonderful Cures which Chriſt performed with ſo much Goodneſs upon thoſe that deſired it, ſhould convince us, that He is an all-powerful and charitable Saviour, and that He is not leſs inclin'd to grant us a Cure for our Souls, a Deliverance from our Sins, and thoſe Graces that are neceſſary for Salvation, than He was formerly to heal the Sick, who implored his Aſſiſtance.

CHAP. V. 17,——39.

I. CHRIST heals a Paralitical Man, and calls *Levi*, which was the Apoſtle St. *Matthew*. II. He anſwers thoſe who found fault with his eating with Sinners. And, III.

gives a Reaſon why his Diſciples did not Faſt, as well as thoſe of *John* the Baptiſt.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THERE are two Things in the Caſe of the Paralitical Perſon, which we ought chiefly to take notice of; one is, the Faith of thoſe that preſented him to the Lord; and the other, his Anſwer to the *Phariſees*, when they accuſed Him of ſpeaking Blaſphemy, becauſe He attributed to himſelf the Power of Pardoning Sin. This teaches us, that Faith is of a very great Efficacy to obtain the Favour of God, and that Chriſt has a Power and an Authority without Bounds, ſince He can pardon the Sins of Men. II. That which is to be obſerved in the Relation St. *Luke* gives, in the Calling of St. *Matthew*, is, that our Lord choſe to himſelf Diſciples and Apoſtles among the Perſons that were not only not of a diſtinguiſhed Rank in the World, but ſuch as were even look'd upon with Contempt by the *Jews*, as were the Publicans, and that the *Phariſees* were ſcandaliz'd at his keeping Company with ſuch People; whereupon He told them, that He *came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance*; thereby teaching us, that the End of his Coming was to ſave Sinners; but however, that Sinners can only be ſaved by Repentance; this likewiſe ſhews us, that we ought to be very glad when God brings back Sinners from their Wandrings, and that even we our ſelves ought likewiſe to endeavour to bring them into the right Way. III. We have ſeen in the third Place, that our Lord did not oblige his Diſciples to Faſt, and to live in ſuch a retir'd and rigid Manner as the Diſciples of *John* the Baptiſt, and thoſe of the *Phariſees*. He did ſo, becauſe

cauſe his Miniſtry engag'd Him to go into different Parts, and to converſe with all kind of People; but He declares however, that his Diſciples would be called, after that He had left them, not only to Faſting, but to great Sufferings; and that if He did not call them thereto at that Time, it was to ſpare their Weakneſs; which is illuſtrated by the Compariſon of an old Cloth, and old Bottles. From hence we may gather, that Chriſt was ſo far from condemning Faſts and a mortified Life, and from ſuffering his Diſciples to hunt after Pleaſures, and gratifie their Senſes, that, on the contrary, He calls them to live in Sobriety and Mortification, and to bear their Croſſes.

CHAP. VI. 1,——19.

I. OUR Lord juſtifies his Diſciples from the Blame laid upon them, for plucking and eating the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath-day. II. He cures a Man that had a wither'd Hand. And, III. He appoints the Twelve Apoſtles.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Reflexions we are to make upon that which our Lord ſaid to the *Phariſees*, who were ſcandaliz'd, becauſe his Diſciples had pluck'd the Ears of Corn on a Sabbath-Day. And, II. becauſe He himſelf had healed a Man with a wither'd Hand on the like Day, is, that Hypocrites, and thoſe who have a falſe Zeal, are offended at that which is innocent and lawful, and ſometimes, even with Actions that are neceſſary and commendable; that they eaſily condemn others, and ſcruple at Things of ſmall Moment, while they themſelves

are wanting in the moſt eſſential Duties of Piety and Charity. We ought therefore to learn from hence, to avoid Hypocriſie, Superſtition, and raſh Judgments, and always to cleave to the moſt weighty Matters in Religion, and to a ſolid Piety, enlighten'd and attended with Charity. III. We ſee next, that our Lord choſe Twelve Apoſtles, to whom He gave Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel, and to work Miracles. And ſince their Names have been preſerved, and that they were the firſt and principal Miniſters of *Jeſus Chriſt*, we ought to bleſs their Memory, and to praiſe God for the great Things He has done by their Means; to imitate their Zeal, and their Virtues; to receive the Doctrine they have taught, as well by word of Mouth, as by Writings; and *Laſtly*, to practiſe the holy Commands which they have left us, as the Apoſtles of our Lord and Saviour, to whom Obedience, Praiſe, and Glory, is to be render'd from Age to Age.

CHAP. VI. 20,——49.

THIS is a Diſcourſe of our Lord, in which He ſpeaks, I. Of thoſe Things that make the Happineſs or Unhappineſs of Men. II. Of Charity, and of the Love that we ought to bear to our Enemies. III. Of raſh Judgments, and of ſome other Duties. And, IV. He concludes this Diſcourſe in ſhewing by a Parable, that it is of no uſe to hear the Word, if we don't do that which is commanded by it.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS is a Diſcourſe that contains ſeveral uſeful Inſtructions. I. The firſt is, that who are poor, afflicted, deſpiſed, and perſecuted,

ted, and who at the ſame time are meek, patient, and godly, are the true Diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and will be happy in this World and the next; and that, on the contrary, thoſe who are thought the moſt Happy, becauſe they live in Plenty and in Pleaſures, and becauſe they are loved and eſteemed by the World, are the moſt miſerable of all Men. II. The ſecond Inſtruction is, that we ought to love every Body, even thoſe that do not love us; to return them Good for Evil, to ſuffer ſome Loſs, rather than revenge our ſelves, or engage in Quarrels and Law-ſuits; that if we only love thoſe who love us, we are no better than Heathens; but that we ought to be merciful, and to do good to all, imitating therein our Heavenly Father, who is kind both to the Wicked and Ungrateful. III. Our Lord has forbid us to paſs raſh Judgments, and declar'd, that it is a very great Piece of Hypocriſie, to examine and cenſure other Mens Faults without amending our own, which are oftentimes greater than thoſe of our Neighbours. IV. The fourth Inſtruction is compris'd in theſe Expreſſions; namely, that *The Tree is known by its Fruit*; and that *From the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh*. That is to ſay, that Men ſhew by their Behaviour and Diſcourſes what they are; and that the Way to order our Actions and Words aright, is to purifie our Hearts. *Laſtly*, Chriſt tells us in the moſt poſitive manner, that He does not acknowledge for his Diſciples thoſe that call Him Lord, but do not obey his Commands; and ſhews, by the Compariſon of one Houſe built on a Rock, and another upon the Sand, that nothing can ſhake thoſe, who, to the Knowledge of the Goſpel, join the Practice of its Duties; whereas thoſe that content themſelves with hearing his Word, without doing

that

that which is order'd therein, cannot reſiſt Temptations, nor attain Salvation. Let us inceſſantly ſet before our Eyes theſe Divine Rules of Morality preſcribed by *Jeſus Chriſt*; let us make them ſubſervient to our advancing in Piety; and let us beſeech Him, that He himſelf will enable us to do it by his Grace.

CHAP. VII. 1,——17.

ST. *Luke* relates two Miracles. I. The Cure of a Servant belonging to a *Gentile* Captain. And, II. the raiſing from the Dead the Son of a Widow Woman of the City of *Nain*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. IN the miraculous Cure wrought upon the Servant of the Centurion, we may chiefly remark the Humility of that Man, who, being a *Gentile* by Birth, thought himſelf not worthy that Chriſt ſhould come into his Houſe; as alſo the greatneſs of his Faith, which appears in his Belief that our Lord, without coming to ſee his Servant, could heal him by one Word only, as eaſily, and as ſoon, as he, who was a Captain, could make himſelf be obeyed by his Soldiers. The Praiſes that our Lord gave that Man, in ſaying, that He had not found ſuch Faith among the *Jews*, and the Miracle He wrought in his favour, ſhews very plainly, that nothing is more acceptable to Him than Faith and Humility; and that a lively Faith, and a profound Senſe of our own Unworthineſs, are the Means to obtain of Him the Effects of his Mercy. II. The other Miracle that our Lord wrought, in raiſing the Son of the Widow of *Nain*,

Nain, is an event whereby the Power of *Jeſus Chriſt* is ſhewn in a manner yet more illuſtrious; his Goodneſs, and the Compaſſion He had for afflicted Perſons, do likewiſe appear there very plainly. Wherefore we have very powerful Motives for Truſt and Reliance on Him in this Hiſtory, which ought to fill us with Comfort; and we ſhould particularly conſider, that our Lord having not only healed the Diſeaſed, but alſo reſtored Life to the Dead, upon ſeveral Occaſions, is able to reſtore it to us too after Death, and that He will certainly do it at the laſt Day, according to his Promiſes.

CHAP. VII. 18,——35.

I. JOHN the Baptiſt ſends two of his Diſciples to ask *Jeſus*, whether He was the Meſſiah; who thereupon works Miracles in their Preſence. II. He ſpeaks of the Miniſtry of *John* the Baptiſt, repreſenting the Excellency and Nature thereof. III. He complains of the Hardneſs of the *Jews*, who had not benifitted neither by his Miniſtry, nor by that of *John* the Baptiſt.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Reading preſents us with the following Reflexions: I. That our Saviour being ask'd, whether He were the Meſſiah, avoided owning that He was ſo; becauſe He would not declare it openly, but contented Himſelf with working Miracles in the Preſence of *John*'s Diſciples; which proved more plainly, that He was the Meſſiah, than if He had ſaid it himſelf. II. The ſecond Reflexion relates to the Manner after which Chriſt made mention of *John* the Baptiſt and of his Miniſtry, by telling the *Jews*, that

that when they went into the Deſart to hear him, they did not ſee a Reed ſhaken with the Wind; that is to ſay, a Man, whoſe Perſon and Diſcourſe deſerved none of their Attention; neither did they ſee there a Man clothed with ſoft Raiment, or appearing with Pomp, like thoſe that dwell in Kings Palaces; but that they had there ſeen a Prophet, and even the greateſt of Prophets, ſince it was he who was to be ſent before the Coming of the Meſſiah. Chriſt intended to ſhew thereby, that People were not to be ſurpris'd if He himſelf appear'd in a very plain Manner, and a lowly Condition; and that his Kingdom was not to be attended with worldly Pomp, as were thoſe of the Kings of the Earth. III. Chriſt ſays, that as great as *John* the Baptiſt was, the leaſt Perſon in the Kingdom of God, that is, in the Church, was greater than he; becauſe the Meaneſt among the Faithful do better underſtand the Meſſiah, and the Reaſons of his Coming, than *John* the Baptiſt himſelf. Theſe Words, which inform us of the Glory and of the Advantages of our Condition, ſhould ſtir us up to act conformably thereto, and to render our ſelves worthy thereof. IV. The laſt Reflexion is, that thoſe Perſons, who were the moſt Contemptible, and the moſt Hated among the *Jews*, were affected at the Preaching of *John* the Baptiſt and our Saviour; but that the *Phariſees*, and thoſe who paſſed for the Wiſeſt among them, had rejected thoſe Exhortations, ſaying, that the Life of *John* the Baptiſt was too ſtrict, and that of Chriſt too looſe, becauſe He often kept Company with Sinners. This Inſtance proves, that nothing can ſatisfie nor affect People that are prejudiced and corrupted; that they abuſe all the Means which God

God employs for their Converſion; whilſt thoſe whoſe Heart is right, do zealouſly lay hold on the ſame.

CHAP. VII. 36,——50.

THIS is the Hiſtory of the Sinner, who waſhed the Feet of Chriſt with her Tears, and whoſe Sins were pardoned by Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS is a very remarkable Hiſtory; we are hereby inſtructed in the Nature of true Repentance, and of its Efficacy. I. We find in the Sinner there mentioned, a Pattern of that profound Humility wherewith great Sinners ought to deplore their Wanderings; and of that lively Sorrow that penetrates the Soul, and which appears outwardly by Tears, and by all the Tokens of a ſincere Compunction, and of a wholſome Confuſion; and which, Laſtly, produces an entire Renunciation of Sin. II. We ſee here with how much Goodneſs the Saviour of the World receives true Penitents, and pardons their Faults. What He ſays to the *Phariſee*, who believed that *Jeſus* was not a Prophet, becauſe He permitted that ſame Sinner to approach Him, and to kiſs his Feet, tended to convince him, that He knew very well what this Woman was, but that He did not reject great Sinners when they were truly Penitent, and that we alſo ſhould neither reject nor deſpiſe them; we muſt likewiſe take a particular Notice of theſe Words of our Lord: *He to whom much is forgiven will love more.* By which He ſhews plainly, that thoſe to whom God pardons great Sins, ought to love Him

Him with greater Fervency, and more carefully avoid Relapſing into their former Diſorders; and that they may even become very acceptable to God, and attain to a conſiderable Degree of Holineſs. This is a Doctrine very proper for the Conſolation of Sinners, and which ought to animate them to the Love of God, and to the Practice of Piety and good Works.

CHAP. VIII. 1,——21.

THIS Part of the eighth Chapter of St. *Luke*, includes Two Things. I. The Parable of the Seed. And, II. the Declaration our Lord makes, that his true Diſciples were as dear to Him as his own Kindred.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Deſign of *Jeſus Chriſt* in the Parable of the Seed, was to teach thoſe that heard Him, that all Men did not receive the Word of God after the ſame manner. The Seed that falls on the Way ſide, repreſents People that are entirely harden'd, and ſuch as this Word does not at all affect. By the Seed that fell among Stones, our Lord deſcribes the Condition of thoſe, on whom the Word makes ſome Impreſſion, who reliſh it at firſt, and receive it gladly, but without perſevering, and yield to Temptation. The Seed that falls among Thorns, ſets before our Eyes the Condition of thoſe Hearers in whom the Goſpel does not produce its effect, their Heart being taken up with the Love of Riches, and filled with the Cares of this Life. But by the Seed that is ſown in good Ground, and that brings forth a great deal of Fruit, Chriſt denotes thoſe

thoſe that receive the Word with an honeſt and good Heart, and upon whom it has its effect. Let us liſten ſeriouſly to this Parable; let us take Care, as our Lord exhorts us here, after what manner we receive the Word of God, and carefully examine our ſelves, to ſee whether we make a good Uſe thereof. II. This is what we are further oblig'd to by the Declaration which our Lord made, when He was told, that his Mother and his near Relations deſired to ſpeak with Him. We may learn from thence, that what chiefly procures us a Share in his Love, is a great Attention, and a great Zeal to hear his Word, and to do his Will; and that therefore it is what we ſhould principally apply our ſelves to. It likewiſe teaches us, that the Bands of Holineſs are yet ſtronger than thoſe of Nature, and that among all thoſe upon whom we ought to beſtow the moſt of our Affection and Eſteem, they ſhould have the Preference, who truly love our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, who ſerve Him with a pure Heart, and keep his Commandments.

CHAP. VIII. 22,——39.

I. CHRIST lays a Tempeſt. II. He heals a Demoniack in the Country of the *Gadarenes*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Account of that which befel the Diſciples, when they were expoſed to a Storm, engages us to take a particular Notice of the Weakneſs of their Faith, and at the ſame time, of the great Goodneſs of our Lord, and of the Power He ſhewed in Calming the Tempeſt; upon which we muſt conſider, that thoſe

thoſe whom God loves, may meet with great Dangers, and that in ſuch a Condition, they may be overcome with Fears, but that God will never forſake them; and that when we have reaſon to believe that He favours us with his Love, and with his Protection, we are then in Safety. II. As for the Hiſtory of the Man poſſeſs'd with a Devil, this is what may be obſerved thereupon: *viz.* That our Lord had an abſolute Power over the Devils; that thoſe wicked Spirits feared and dreaded Him as their Judge; and that theſe miraculous Deliverances ſhewed, that He was to deſtroy the Kingdom of the Devil. It muſt be moreover obſerved, that if our Lord permitted the Devils to enter into the Swine, and to make them run headlong into the Sea, it was to ſhew, that theſe evil Spirits could do nothing but by his Permiſſion, and that the Man whom He had cured was really poſſeſs'd by the Devil. He did it likewiſe to try the *Gadarenes*, and to ſee whether they would be more ſenſible of that Loſs, than of the Advantage of enjoying his Preſence. *Laſtly*, We ſhould conſider, that tho' Mankind are not ſo much expoſed to the Power of the Devil as they were in our Saviour's time, when He deliver'd ſuch as were poſſeſs'd, they may fall however after another Manner into the Power of this Enemy of our Salvation. 'Tis what happens to thoſe, of whom the Scripture ſays, *Eph.* ii. 2. 2 *Tim.* ii. 26. Matt. xxv. 41. that the Devil works upon them powerfully; and who, if they don't break looſe from thoſe Snares in which they have been taken to do his Will, ſhall be caſt into everlaſting Fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII. 40,——56.

OUR Lord does here two Miracles. I. He cures a Woman diſeaſed with loſs of Blood. II. And raiſes to Life the Daughter of *Jairus*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE two Miracles mention'd in this Part of the eighth Chapter, engage us to make the following Reflexions: I. The firſt relates to the Opinion and Behaviour of that Woman, who not daring to preſent her ſelf before the Lord, to beg Him to heal her, was contented to touch his Garment; this ſhews the profound Humility of this Woman, and at the ſame time the greatneſs of her Faith, and the high Thoughts ſhe had of the Power of Chriſt. Her ſpeedy and miraculous Cure does not only diſplay the Divine Virtue that was in our Saviour, but does likewiſe convince us, that with Humility and Faith we ſhall obtain of Him every thing neceſſary to Salvation. II. The Reſurrection of the Daughter of *Jairus*, is a Miracle ſtill more conſiderable, and more worthy of Notice than the foregoing, ſince this Miracle does not ſuffer us to doubt whether Chriſt could raiſe the Dead, nor that He ſhall one Day do the ſame for our ſakes alſo. This therefore ought to confirm us in the Belief of the Promiſes which He has made us of a better Life, raiſe us to a ſteddy Expectation of Immortality, and ſtir us up more and more to Holineſs of Life, and to the Exerciſe of good Works.

CHAP. IX. 1,——17.

ST. *Luke* relates three Things. I. The Miſſion of the Twelve Apoſtles throughout *Judea*, and the Inſtructions which our Lord gave them. II. The Opinion that King *Herod* had of Chriſt. III. The miraculous Multiplication of five Loaves and two Fiſhes.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WHAT we are to conſider upon the ſending the Apoſtles is, that Chriſt order'd them to go before Him into *Judea*, in order to ſpread every where the glad Tidings of the Arrival of the Meſſiah, and to prepare the *Jews*, by their Preaching, and by their Miracles, for his Reception. He forbad them to make any Proviſion or Preparation for that Journey, becauſe they were not to go far, nor to be long abſent from Him. He was likewiſe willing thereby to prepare them for the future Preaching of the Goſpel throughout the whole Earth, and for relying upon Providence; but that which we are chiefly to obſerve in Chriſt's Speech to them is, that the Miniſtry of the Servants of God is only profitable to thoſe that receive them; and that thoſe who reject them, draw upon themſelves a ſevere, but juſt Condemnation. II. We ſee in the ſecond Place, that they had a high Opinion of our Lord among the *Jews*, ſince they took Him for *Elias*, or ſome other of the Prophets; but it is a Thing worth notice, that *Herod*, who was of the Sect of the *Sadducees*, by whom the Reſurrection is denied, ſhould imagine, that *John* the Baptiſt, whom he had put to Death, was riſen again. We muſt conſider it as an effect of the Remorſes which ſtung that wicked

wicked Prince's Conſcience, for having put to Death this holy Man. But the Wicked are always fearful, and the Terrors even of their Conſcience make them ſometimes believe things which they had rejected and denied before. III. The Miracle of the Five Loaves is attended with two particular Circumſtances, one, that our Lord did it in the Preſence of above Five Thouſand Perſons, and for their ſakes: The other, that the Apoſtles having filled twelve Baskets with the Fragments that remained, they became a freſh Proof of the Truth of this Miracle. Thus it ſerves ſo much the better to confirm the Truth of the Doctrine of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and his Divine Miſſion.

CHAP. IX. 18,——45.

I. OUR Lord asks his Diſciples their Opinions concerning Him; to which St. *Peter* anſwers, that they look'd upon Him to be the Son of God. He warns them of his Death, and exhorts them to prepare themſelves for Sufferings, and to make an open Profeſſion of the Goſpel. II. He is afterwards transfigured in the Preſence of three of them. III. He heals a Lunatick, who could not be cured by his Apoſtles. IV. He tells them that He ſhould be condemn'd to Death, which they could not comprehend, becauſe they did not believe that the Meſſiah was to die.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS is what we may gather from the firſt Part of this Chapter: I. That we ought all to believe with our Hearts, and confeſs with our Mouths, as St. *Peter* did formerly, that *Jeſus* is the Chriſt, the Son of the

Living God. II. That *Jeſus Chriſt* came into the World to ſuffer, and to die. III. That what He requires of thoſe who would be his Diſciples, is to deny themſelves, to take up their Croſs, and always to make a publick and ſincere Profeſſion of their Faith. IV. That there is nothing of greater Importance to us than the Salvation of our Soul, and that it would be of no Advantage to us to gain the whole World at the Expence of our Souls. That which ought to be chiefly conſider'd in the Transfiguration of our Lord is, that the Glory with which the Apoſtles ſaw Him then ſurrounded, and the Voice that came from Heaven, demonſtrate the Truth and Divinity of the Goſpel; as St. *Peter* himſelf, who was preſent at that Transfiguration, takes notice in the firſt Chapter of his ſecond Epiſtle. The Preſence of *Moſes* and *Elias*, that was ſeen with *Jeſus*, and who diſcours'd Him about what He was to ſuffer at *Jeruſalem*, ſhews, that this was He whoſe Coming had been foretold by the Prophets, but that He is more Excellent than they; it likewiſe proves, that thoſe holy Men did exiſt after their Death, and that there is another Life for the Righteous. V. We ſee in the Cure of the Lunatick, that the Faith of the Apoſtles was ſtill very Weak, as our Lord reproaches them; and that it was by reaſon of the ſmalneſs of their Faith, that they could not cure this Mad-man; but that that Faith was fortified afterwards in Proportion, as they were better inſtructed, and as their Prejudices wore away. Faith is not leſs neceſſary for Sanctification, and for Salvation, than it was formerly for working Miracles. Our Stumblings, and our Failings, proceed only from the Want of Faith; for which Reaſon, we ought to labour

to

to be confirmed therein, and to beſeech the Lord, that it may be more and more increaſed in us.

CHAP. IX. 46,——62.

I. CHRIST teaches his Diſciples Humility, who, from the Opinion that their Maſter would reign upon Earth, diſputed among themſelves who ſhould be the greateſt in his Kingdom. II. He blames St. *John* for having hinder'd a Man that did not follow Him, from caſting out Devils in his Name. III. He cenſures two of the Apoſtles, who would have called for Fire from Heaven upon the *Samaritans*, that refuſed to entertain Him. IV. He returns an Anſwer to three Perſons that would have followed Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. LET us remember theſe Leſſons of Humility which our Lord gave his Diſciples; let us learn from thence, that haughty Thoughts, and the Love of worldly Glory, are unworthy of Chriſtians; and that if we would enter into the Kingdom of God, we muſt become Children in Meekneſs and Humility, and ſhew our Eſteem for all thoſe that believe in Chriſt, and that love Him, even tho' they be mean and contemptible in the World. II. The Anſwer that our Lord gave St. *John*, who would have hinder'd a Man from caſting out Devils in Chriſt's Name, becauſe that Perſon did not keep Company with the Apoſtles, teaches us, that we muſt never oppoſe, upon any Pretence, thoſe who labour ſincerely to advance the Kingdom of our Lord. III. There are weighty Conſiderations to be made upon the Reproof

which Chriſt gave *James* and *John*, who, being tranſported with an indiſcreet Zeal, and with that Averſion which the *Jews* bore to the *Samaritans*, were for bringing down Fire from Heaven upon thoſe of them that had refuſed to lodge their Maſter. This is a Warning to us, never to ſuffer our ſelves to be overcome by a falſe and blind Zeal, or by a Spirit of Revenge; but to be always endued, as Chriſt himſelf was, with the Spirit of Patience, Meekneſs, and Forbearance towards all the World, and particularly towards ſuch as are in Error, and that entertain Sentiments of Religion different from our own. IV. By the Anſwers which Chriſt gave the three Perſons that would have follow'd Him, He would have them to underſtand, *firſt*, That He did not promiſe the Conveniencies of this Life to his Diſciples. *Secondly*, That they muſt be prepared to forſake all Things for the Love of Him, even ſuch as are innocent and lawful, when they are a Hindrance to the Diſcharge of our Duties. And *Thirdly*, When Men are once engaged in his Service, they are bound to follow that Call, and not to look back to the World.

CHAP. X. 1,——24.

I. CHRIST chuſes ſeventy Diſciples, ſends them before Him, gives them the Power of working Miracles, and the neceſſary Inſtructions for their Buſineſs; and denounces the Judgments of God againſt thoſe Cities which had not repented upon his Preaching, and doing Miracles in them. II. The ſeventy Diſciples render an Account to Chriſt of the Succeſs of their Journey and Miniſtry, upon which Occaſion, He foretels the Deſtruction of

of the Kingdom of Satan. III. He praiſes God, that the Goſpel was preached and received by Perſons that were of no Rank nor Diſtinction in the World; and He repreſents to his Diſciples how happy they were in being inſtructed by Him in the great Truths of the Goſpel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE may obſerve, that Chriſt ſent ſeventy Diſciples into *Judea*, to the end, that the happy Tidings of the Coming of the Kingdom of God might be ſpread with the greater Diſpatch, and that they might be the better able to go and preach the ſame Doctrine throughout all the Earth afterwards. The Inſtructions which He gave them ſhew, that the Servants of God ought to exerciſe their Office with fidelity, diſintereſtedneſs, and courage; that thoſe whoſe Heart is right, and who are of a peaceful Mind, will receive them, but that thoſe who refuſe to hear them are inexcuſable. II. The Threatnings which Chriſt denounces againſt the Cities of *Galilee*, where He had preached and done Miracles, are a Warning to us, that thoſe to whom our Saviour has cauſed the Goſpel to be preached, and that do not grow better by it, muſt expect the ſevereſt Puniſhment. III. Upon what Chriſt ſaid to the ſeventy Diſciples, when they gave Him an Account of the Succeſs of their Journey, and of the Miracles which they had wrought, we may obſerve, that He foretold the ſpeedy Ruine of the Kingdom of Satan, which effectually happen'd ſoon after by the Preaching of the Goſpel. He likewiſe declared to them, that tho' it was a very glorious Privilege, to be able to caſt out Devils, they ought rather to rejoice

that their Names were written in Heaven; that is to ſay, that they were the Diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and that the Joys and Glories of Heaven were reſerved for them. The Advantage of belonging to God, and to be of the Number of the truly Faithful, is infinitely more conſiderable than the Power of working Miracles. IV. Let us alſo carefully liſten to the Praiſes which Chriſt returned to God, that the Goſpel was received by the Mean and Humble, whilſt the great Men of the World, and thoſe who were look'd upon as the Wiſeſt, did reject it. It is not to worldly Perſons, and thoſe that are filled with a good Opinion of themſelves, that God reveals himſelf; but it is to the Meek and Lowly, and to ſuch as are of a ſincere Heart. V. Let us alſo obſerve what our Lord has ſo ſtrongly aſſured us, that we are happy in being inſtructed by Him, and in knowing thoſe Truths of the Goſpel which were not known by the ancient Prophets as they are by us; but let us remember at the ſame time, that if we do not make a good Uſe of our Happineſs, ſuch Knowledge will only ſerve to render us more miſerable, and that it will be much better for us to have never enjoy'd it.

CHAP. X. 25,——42.

I. CHRIST anſwers one of the Scribes, who asked Him, what he muſt do to obtain everlaſting Life. II. To teach that Doctor of the Law, that all Men are our Neighbours, He propoſes to him the Parable of a Man that fell into the Hands of Thieves. III. Chriſt going to lodge in the Houſe of *Martha* and *Mary*, takes occaſion to commend the Piety of *Mary*, who

who kept close to Him, that she might hear Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS furnishes us with Three Instructions. I. That the chief Command of God, and the Sum of all Religion is, to love God above all Things, and our Neighbour as our selves, and that this is what we are bound to do, if we desire to attain to eternal Life. II. That there is no Body who is not our Neighbour, and whom we ought not to love. This is what Christ teaches us by the Parable of the *Jew*, who being wounded by Thieves, was not assisted, neither by a Priest, nor by a Levite, tho' they were his own Country Men; but was relieved by a *Samaritan*, who was a Stranger, and of a People hated by the *Jews*. The Design of Christ was thereby to shew, that all Men, without Exception, even Strangers, and those that don't love us, are our Neighbours; that we are obliged to love them all, to do good to them, and to succour the Unfortunate with all our Might. III. The third Instruction is taken from that which is said in this Chapter, of *Martha* and *Mary*. The Judgment our Lord passed upon the Behaviour of those two Sisters teaches us, that our chief Care ought to be to adhere to Him, and to hearken to his Word; and that the Employments of this Life, even such as are lawful, ought never to make us neglect the Thing that is most important of all: Let us therefore always set this Lesson before our Eyes; let us always remember, that there is one only Thing necessary, and, like *Mary*, let us chuse that good Part which shall never be taken from us. God grant us Grace to do it. *Amen.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XI. 1,——28.

WHAT we are going to read, contains theſe Four Heads. I. Chriſt inſtructs his Diſciples about Prayer. II. He cures a Demoniack, and returns an Anſwer to the *Phariſees*, who ſaid that it was by the Power of Satan he caſt out Devils. III. He propoſes the Parable of a Man, in whom the evil Spirit enters after it had gone out of him. IV. He ſpeaks of the Happineſs of thoſe, who hear his Word and keep it.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt Inſtruction which we ought to carry away with us, relates to Prayer, and particularly to the Lord's Prayer. This Divine Prayer having *Jeſus Chriſt* for its Author, and including all that is moſt important for us to ask, firſt, with reſpect to the Glory of God, and in the next Place, to our own Wants, as well for the Body as the Soul, we ought to preſent it to God with all poſſible Submiſſion and Attention; and at the ſame time, with a firm Truſt that God will hear us. Our Lord teaches us moreover, that Prayer is of a great Efficacy when it is made with Fervour and Perſeverance, and when we ask of God real Goods, that is to ſay, ſpiritual Goods; all this ought to ſtir us up powerfully to pray with Zeal, and not to faint under this holy Exerciſe. II. The Blaſphemy of the *Phariſees*, who attributed to the Devil the Miracle which Chriſt wrought by virtue of the Spirit of God, is an Example of deſperate Malice. We ſee hereby that Men, who have a wicked Heart, and reſiſt the Grace of God, may fall into the utmoſt

moſt Impiety; that they render unprofitable the ſtrongeſt Means uſed by God to overcome their Hardneſs, and that even they are more and more confirmed in their Wickedneſs, whereby they put an invincible Bar to their own Salvation, expoſing themſelves to the moſt terrible Puniſhment. III. The Similitude of the evil Spirit, that came out of him that was poſſeſs'd, ſhews, what would happen to the *Jews*, who had not laid hold of the Advantage of Chriſt's Preſence, and of his Miracles; namely, that they would fall into a greater Obdurateneſs, and would feel the Divine Vengeance; this is likewiſe what happens to all ſuch, who, after having receiv'd the Grace of God, do reſiſt the Operation thereof, and embark themſelves anew in Sin. IV. Let us learn, Laſtly, from the Anſwer which our Saviour made to the Woman that admired his Diſcourſe, that the moſt glorious, and the moſt advantageous Thing to our ſelves is, to hear the Word of God, and to obſerve what it commands, as is ſhewn by this Expreſſion, which we ought carefully to remember; *Bleſſed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.*

CHAP. XI. 29,——54.

THESE are the Contents of what we are going to read. I. Our Lord reproves the Unbelief of the *Jews*, by ſetting before them the Example of the *Ninevites*, and of the Queen of *Sheba*. II. He tells them, that ſuch their Unbelief could not hinder his Doctrine, which was as a Light to lighten Mankind, from being preached; and He ſhews, that, in order to receive any benefit from it, our Eye muſt be pure and ſingle, which is as much as to ſay, our Minds muſt be free and diſingag'd from Pre-

Prejudice and Paſſion. III. Being invited to dine with a *Phariſee*, He declaims againſt the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, reproaching them for their Hypocriſie, Pride, and Infidelity, and threatning them with the Judgments of God.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE muſt conſider here, I. That if the Example of the Queen of *Sheba*, and that of the *Ninevites*, condemned the unbelieving *Jews*, much more will it condemn us, if we don't obey the Goſpel, ſince God has granted us yet more Light and more Grace than He did to the *Jews*, who lived at the Time of Chriſt. II. What our Saviour ſaid of the Candle ſet in a Candleſtick, and of the Eye, which is the Light of the Body, ſignifies theſe two Things: The one, that He had made known his Doctrine to his Diſciples, to the end, that they might ſpread it every where; and the other, that our Minds muſt be rightly diſpoſed, and our Hearts pure and ſincere, in order to receive and to underſtand the Excellency of the ſaid Doctrine. III. We have ſeen our Lord reproaching the *Phariſees* for obſerving an external Purity, for affecting great Appearances of Virtue, Piety, Zeal, and Humility, and for ſhewing a great Reſpect to the Memory of the Prophets, whilſt their Hearts were filled with Pride and Covetouſneſs, whilſt they perſecuted thoſe whom God had ſent to them, and hinder'd Men from believing in Him; for which Reaſons, He threatens them with total Deſtruction. Hereby we may ſee in how great Guilt Men involve themſelves, when they ſuffer Pride and Covetouſneſs to poſſeſs their Hearts, when they reject the Word of God, and turn others away

away from Faith and Holineſs. Above all, this Diſcourſe of our Lord teaches us, that God abhors Hypocriſie; that thoſe who go no farther than to an outward Purity, and neglect that of the Mind and Conſcience, are an Abomination to Him. Let us therefore ſtudy true Holineſs. Let us remember that God chiefly has reſpect to the inward Parts, and that the only Way to pleaſe Him is, to have an upright Heart, and to be filled with Charity; to be truly Humble, to receive his Word with ſubmiſſion, and to contribute all that in us lies to bring other Men to Faith and Salvation.

CHAP. XII. 1,—34.

THIS Chapter contains an excellent Diſcourſe of our Lord, and we ought very carefully to hearken to the Reading of it. I. He exhorts his Diſciples not to diſſemble the Truths which they had learned of Him, but to declare them publickly; and that the Fear of Men might not hinder them from ſo doing, He warns them to fear none but God, and to make an open Confeſſion of the Truth, and promiſes to defend and aſſiſt them when they ſhould appear before the great Men of the World. II. Upon the Occaſion of a Man, who had a Diſpute with another about an Inheritance, He declaims againſt Covetouſneſs, ſhewing by the Parable of a rich Man, the Folly of ſuch as care for nothing but heaping up Wealth; and telling them, that they ſhould not take care for the Neceſſities of Life, but depend upon Providence, and to be chiefly ſollicitous for what relates to the Kingdom of God. III. He aſſures his Diſciples, that tho' they were weak, and but few in Number, they ſhould not fear the

Want

Want of whatever was neceſſary to them, and He exhorts them to make a right Uſe of worldly Goods.

Reflexions after the Reading.

CHRIST inſtructs us here about the Profeſſion of Truth, and the Love of worldly Goods. I. Upon the firſt Head, we ſee that Chriſtians, and eſpecially the Miniſters of *Jeſus Chriſt*, ought to make a publick Profeſſion of the Truth, without ſtanding in Fear of Men, ſince Men can only kill the Body, whereas God can caſt both Soul and Body into Hell. Our Lord declares moreover, that God watches over thoſe who fear Him, and who ſuffer for his ſake; that He aſſiſts them by his Spirit; that at the laſt Day He will own them for his that ſhall have had the Courage to call themſelves his Diſciples; but that He wont own thoſe who, through fear of Death, ſhall not have dared to make an open Confeſſion of their Faith. Theſe are very ſtrong Conſiderations, to animate us to a frank and ſincere Profeſſion of Chriſtianity. II. Let us ſeriouſly reflect upon what our Lord ſays concerning the Love of worldly Goods, and upon the Parable of the Man that had heaped up great Wealth, but died at the Time he thought to enjoy them. Chriſt was willing to ſhew thereby, that it is a great Folly to care only for gathering of Riches, which we muſt leave when we come to die, and to neglect the acquiring heavenly Goods, which are ſolid and eternal. He has likewiſe exhorted us not to diſquiet our ſelves for the Wants of the Body, but to truſt to Providence, which provides for the Neceſſities of all Creatures; to ſeek before all Things the Kingdom of God, and to employ our Wealth in Alms, in order to ſecure

ſecure to our ſelves thereby the Poſſeſſion of everlaſting Riches. Theſe are moſt wholſome Inſtructions. Let us beſeech God, that He will give us Grace, carefully to remember them, and to conform our Thoughts and Behaviour thereto.

CHAP. XII. 35,——59.

CHRIST does Four Things here. I. He exhorts his Diſciples to watch, and to be continually prepared for his Coming. II. He repreſents to them, that the Duties of which He had diſcours'd, related to them in a particular Manner, they being as it were Stewards, appointed in the Houſe of their Maſter, for the Inſtruction of the reſt; and that having receiv'd a greater Knowledge of the Will of God, they would be treated with greater Severity if they did not perform it. III. He warns them, that great Troubles would ariſe in the World upon the Account of his Doctrine. IV. He laments the Blindneſs of the *Jews*, who did not acknowledge that the Time of the Meſſiah was come, and He exhorts them to lay hold of that Opportunity, and to reconcile themſelves with God whilſt it was in their Power.

Reflexions after the Reading.

LET us learn from hence, I. That ſince we are ignorant when Chriſt will come, and that we may be called every Moment to give up our Accounts to Him, we ought always to watch, and to apply our ſelves inceſſantly to our Duty, to the end, that when He comes, He may find us employ'd in Well-doing. II. That thoſe to whom God has given his Knowledge,

ledge, and chiefly, the Miniſters of the Church, are bound to uſe it for the Good of others, and to the Glory of their Maſter, if they would not be puniſhed as unfaithful Servants; that, in general, He who knows the Will of God, and does it not, ſhall be treated with greater Severity, and that God will require a greater Account of thoſe, to whom He ſhall have granted more Light, and more Grace. III. What our Lord ſays, that He was come to kindle Fire and Diviſion in the World, does not ſignifie, that He came with ſuch a Deſign, nor that the Goſpel tends to ſet Men at variance; ſince that, on the contrary, the Coming of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Goſpel, have no other end, but to cauſe Peace to reign; but his Meaning was, that Mankind, by an effect of their Malice, would take occaſion from his Doctrine to hate and perſecute one another. Our Lord warns his Diſciples thereof, that they might not be ſtagger'd when the Thing ſhould come to paſs; wherefore neither ought we to be any more ſurpriz'd, when we ſee that Troubles are excited in the World upon the Account or Pretence of Religion. IV. If the *Jews* were obliged to own, that the Time of the Manifeſtation of the Meſſiah was come, we ought to be much more convinced thereof; and to make a better Uſe than the *Jews* did of the Happineſs we have, to live in a Time in which the Mercy of God is ſo clearly revealed, and haſten to make our Peace with Him, and to prevent his Judgment, before we are called to appear in his Preſence.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII. 1,——17.

OUR Lord exhorts, I. the *Jews* to take warning from that which happened to certain *Galileans* whom *Pilate* had put to Death whilſt they were Offering their Sacrifices, and from thoſe eighteen Perſons who had been killed by the Fall of a Tower. II. He propoſes in this View, the Parable of the barren Fig-Tree. III. He cures a Woman that had been ill and crooked for eighteen Years.

Reflexions after the Reading.

CHRIST teaches us here, I. That we muſt not imagine, that thoſe whom ſome great misfortune befals, are always the moſt Criminal; nor that we are better than they, becauſe God is pleaſed to ſpare us; but that He often bears with the Guilty, for Reaſons of Wiſdom and Goodneſs, whilſt He afflicts others that are not greater Sinners than they; wherefore, inſtead of Condemning thoſe whom God viſits, and inſtead of Flattering our ſelves, we ſhould repent and grow better by the Misfortunes that happen to them, leaſt we ſhould be handled more ſeverely than they. II. The Meaning of the Parable of the barren Fig-Tree was, that God, who had already ſhewn great Patience towards the *Jews*, did then make uſe of the laſt Means for their Converſion, by cauſing them to be called to Repentance by Chriſt; after which they were to be deſtroyed, as it actually happened in a few Years from thence. This Parable ſets before our Eyes, how patiently and graciouſly God bears with Sinners, making uſe of the moſt efficacious Methods to bring them

to Repentance; but we may likewiſe learn, that by their Obſtinacy and Impenitence, they draw upon themſelves the utmoſt Miſeries. III. We have ſeen, that Chriſt, by an effect of his Power, and of his great Love, having healed a Woman that went double for eighteen Years together, there were ſome who were ſcandaliz'd at his doing this Miracle on the Sabbath-Day. What Chriſt ſays, to ſtop the Mouths of thoſe People, and to convince them of their Ignorance as well as of their Wickedneſs, teaches us, that the Practice of Charity and good Works, is the moſt neceſſary thing in Religion; that theſe Duties are always in Seaſon; and that we ſhould let ſlip no Occaſion of Diſcharging them, tho' there ſhould be People of ſo evil a Diſpoſition as to be offended at them.

CHAP. XIII. 18,——35.

OUR Lord propoſes, I. The Compariſon of a Grain of Muſtard, and that of Leaven. II. He anſwers the Queſtion that was ask'd Him, whether there was but few that would be ſaved; He exhorts us to enter timely into the Way of Salvation; He deſcribes the Deſpair of thoſe that ſhould be excluded from it; and He foretels, that the unbelieving *Jews*, who had not made any Advantage of his Preſence, ſhould be ſhut out of the Kingdom of God, whilſt other Nations would be admitted. III. Upon the Warning which was given Him, that *Herod* ſought to put Him to Death, He declares He did not fear that cunning and deceitful Prince; He ſays, that his Miniſtry was drawing towards a Concluſion, and that He ſhould really loſe his Life in a ſhort Time, but that He ſhould ſuffer Death in

in *Jeruſalem*, and not in *Galilee*, where *Herod* reign'd; upon which occaſion, He deplores the Ingratitude, Obdurateneſs, and Deſtruction of that City.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Parables of the Muſtard-Seed, and of the Leaven, ſignifie, that tho' the Goſpel was received by very few, whilſt our Saviour was in the World, and that the Beginnings of his Kingdom were very weak, it ſhould be eſtabliſh'd in all Places, and in a very ſmall ſpace of Time, as it fell out accordingly; which proves the Divinity of the Goſpel. II. We ought carefully to meditate upon the Anſwer which our Lord returned to thoſe that asked Him, whether there would be but few People ſaved: *Strive*, ſays He, *to enter into the Strait-Gate: For many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.* Theſe Words teach us, that inſtead of putting vain and curious Queſtions about the Salvation of others, our principal Care ought to be, to attain to it our ſelves; that we ought to take continual Pains for it, and to begin early; that when the Opportunity is loſt, we ſhall not be admitted any more; and that then, all that will remain to the Wicked for their Part, will be nothing but Remorſe and Deſpair, to ſee themſelves excluded from the Bleſſings of Heaven through their own fault. III. We have ſeen that our Lord feared neither the Craft nor Cruelty of *Herod*, becauſe He knew that He was not to die in *Galilee*, but at *Jeruſalem*. This ſhews us, that wicked Men cannot always execute their Deſigns, much leſs thoſe of God, and that we need fear nothing when we walk in our Calling. Laſtly, The Tenderneſs wherewith our Lord laments the

Ingratitude and Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, by ſaying, that He would have ſcreen'd the *Jews* from the Judgments of God, but that they would not; ſhews very plainly, that God has no other Views nor Deſigns, with regard to Men, but thoſe of Love; and that no evil befals them, but what they bring upon themſelves, by deſpiſing his Goodneſs, and by ſlighting and rejecting the Offers of his Grace.

CHAP. XIV.

I. OUR Lord dining with a *Phariſee*, cures a Dropſical Perſon; and proves, that Men ought not to be offended therewith, tho' that Miracle was done on a Sabbath-day. II. He gives Leſſons of Humility and Charity to thoſe who ſat at Table with Him. III. He propoſes to them the Parable of the Feaſt, to which thoſe that were invited would not go. IV. He declares that thoſe who would be his Diſciples, ſhould be ready to forſake all that was moſt dear to them, and even their Lives, and ſhews, by two Similitudes, the Neceſſity of that Duty.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Cure which Chriſt granted to the Hydropical Man ſhews, that He was always ready to do good to Men, and that there was no ſort of Diſtemper which He did not heal; and what He ſaid to thoſe, who did not approve of his working Miracles upon a Sabbath-Day, ſhews, that we muſt avoid raſh and hypocritical Cenſures, and lay hold upon all Occaſions that offer, to do Works of Goodneſs and Charity. II. The ſecond Leſſon we have here, relates to Humility and Charity; Chriſt

recommends to us both thoſe Duties, by ſaying, that they who endeavour to exalt themſelves ſhall be abaſed before God, and even before Men; whereas thoſe that are humble and lowly, ſhall be exalted; and by exhorting us not to imitate thoſe worldly People, who only welcome the Rich and their Friends, but deſpiſe and neglect the Poor and Unfortunate. III. The Parable of the Feaſt ſignifies, that the *Jews*, and eſpecially the chiefeſt among them, were about to be rejected, for not having embraced the Invitations which God made them by *Jeſus Chriſt* and his Apoſtles; and that thoſe who were the moſt deſpis'd, and even the *Gentiles* themſelves, ſhould receive thoſe Favours which the *Jews* had rejected. This alſo relates to Chriſtians, who do not anſwer their Call, and who, upon frivolous Excuſes, and from the Attachment they have to the Things of the Earth, neglect the Offers of Divine Mercy, and by this means loſe the Right they have to Salvation. IV. Chriſt warns us moſt expreſly, that in order to be his Diſciples, we muſt firſt renounce our ſelves, and every thing that may hinder us from following Him. 'Tis with this View, that He propoſes the Parable of a Man that was going to build a Tower, and that of one King who was about to fight with another. By which He teaches us, that we muſt not lightly or inconſiderately engage in his Service; and that before we aſſume the Name of Chriſtians, and make Profeſſion thereof, we ſhould examine our ſelves, and ſee whether we be firmly reſolved to be faithful to Him, and whether we ſhall have the Courage to reſiſt Temptation, to bear our Croſs, and even to induce others to the Practice of the ſame Faith and Piety, by our Prudence and good Example.

CHAP. XV.

THIS is the Deſign and Subject of this Chapter; the *Phariſees* being offended at our Saviour's eating with Sinners, He propoſes three Parables to them. I. That of the loſt Sheep. II. That of the Piece of Money that was loſt. And, III. That of the Prodigal Son. His Deſign was to ſhew by theſe three Parables, that God calls Sinners to Repentance, and that therefore the *Phariſees* were to blame to find fault with his keeping Company with thoſe People.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE three Similitudes related in this Chapter, tend all to the ſame Purpoſe; which is, to ſet before our Eyes the great Mercies of God to Sinners; and to ſhew, that their Converſion is very acceptable to Him, and that the holy Angels are rejoiced at it; all ſuch as love God ought likewiſe to be glad, and even to contribute every thing in their Power thereto, and not to be ſorry or jealous, as were the *Phariſees*, who could not bear to ſee *Jeſus* in the Company of Men of an evil Life. This is what is chiefly denoted by the Parable of the lewd Son, by whom our Lord repreſents thoſe that were great Sinners, or counted ſuch; the Return of that Son to his Father's Houſe, is a Type of the Converſion of ſuch Sinners. The Tenderneſs with which his Father received him, ſhews, that God takes Pleaſure in the Repentance and Amendment of Sinners, and that He is full of Goodneſs towards them. The Jealouſie and Concern which the eldeſt Son ſhewed, becauſe his Brother had been receiv'd ſo kindly

kindly and joyfully, repreſents the Temper of thoſe *Phariſees*, who thought themſelves better than other Men, and who were offended at our Lord's eating and keeping Company with Publicans and Sinners. That's the Meaning of this inſtructive Parable. It furniſhes us with ſeveral very uſeful Reflexions: We ſee thereby the Deviations of Sinners, and the criminal Abuſe they make of the Favours of God; we ſee likewiſe the Goodneſs of God in Chaſtiſing them, in order to bring them back to their Duty; the Return of thoſe that come to God by Repentance; the Pardon which He grants them, and the Joy that their Converſion ought to excite in the Minds of all pious and charitable Perſons. Theſe are Inſtructions, to which all of us ought moſt ſeriouſly to attend, which we ought carefully to read over and over, and meditate upon all the Parts thereof; but Sinners eſpecially are bound to apply this Parable to themſelves, to the end that they may be encourag'd thereby to return to God by a ready and ſincere Repentance. The Lord grant them this Grace. *Amen.*

CHAP. XVI.

I. CHRIST ſhews by the Parable of the unfaithful Steward, the Uſe we ought to make of the good Things of the World. II. Next, He repreſents, that the Love of Riches is very dangerous; and reproves the *Phariſees* for their Covetouſneſs, and for oppoſing the Eſtabliſhment of the Kingdom of God from the Time of *John* the Baptiſt. III. And *Laſtly*, to illuſtrate and confirm what He had ſaid about the Uſe of Riches, He adds the Parable of the wicked rich Man.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS whole *Sixteenth* Chapter of St. *Luke* tends to teach us, how we muſt uſe the good Things of this World. What is here ſaid of this unfaithful Steward, who, to make himſelf Friends, diſcharged his Maſter's Debtors of Part of what they owed him, muſt not be underſtood, as if Chriſt commended the Proceeding of that Man, ſince ſuch an Action would be a crying Injuſtice, and breach of Truſt. He only deſign'd to teach us thereby, that as this Steward rais'd himſelf Friends by the Goods of his Maſter, before he left his Service; ſo we ought to ſecure for our ſelves the Entrance into a better Life, by employing our Wealth in pious and charitable Purpoſes. 'Tis to ſtir us up to this Duty, that Chriſt ſays, that thoſe who cannot make a right Uſe of the corruptible Things of this Life, do thereby ſhew, that they are unworthy to poſſeſs heavenly Things. 'Tis with the ſame View He declares, that we cannot ſerve God, and ſet our Heart upon Riches at the ſame time; and this is what He proves by the Example of the *Phariſees*, who were covetous; and to whom He ſays, that although they had a very high Eſteem of themſelves, they were abominable in the Sight of God, and the profeſſed Enemies of his Kingdom. But it is particularly what He aims at by the Parable of the wicked rich Man and of *Lazarus*, whereby our Lord repreſents what happens to thoſe, who, inſtead of aſſiſting the Miſerable, employ their Wealth in gratifying their own Luxury and Senſuality. Beſides which, we ſee in this Parable, that as the Condition of Men is very different in this Life, ſo it will likewiſe be after Death; we diſcover thereby, that the Righteous

Righteous enjoy ſweet repoſe after their Death, whilſt the Wicked are tormented, and that the Condition of them both is unchangeable and irretrievable. The Anſwer which the Patriarch *Abraham* returned to the wicked rich Man, who pray'd him to ſend *Lazarus* to his Brethren, is a Leſſon to us, that God gives us, during this Life, by his holy Word, Means ſufficient to avoid Deſtruction; that thoſe who do not lay hold on theſe Means, are without excuſe; that they muſt not expect that God ſhould work Miracles for their Converſion; and that altho' He ſhould, yet ſuch Miracles will not convince them. All theſe Inſtructions are of the utmoſt Importance; let us take good heed to them, and beſeech God to imprint them in our Hearts.

CHAP. XVII. 1,——19.

MEntion is made here, I. Of Offences. II. Of Pardon of Sin. III. Of the Efficacy of Faith. IV. Of the Obligation we lye under of doing what God commands us, without pretending to merit thereby. V. The Hiſtory of the Curing of the Ten Lepers.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Inſtructions contained in this Part of the Chapter, are the following: I. That the giving Scandal or Offence, is a great Evil; that as Men are made, it is an unavoidable Thing that there will happen Offences, but that thoſe who are the Occaſion of them, ſhall receive the Puniſhment. II. That we ought not to bear any Grudge againſt thoſe that offend us, but that we muſt pardon them, and even pardon them always, tho' they ſhould injure

jure us very often. III. That Faith being as neceſſary and as efficacious towards pleaſing God, and in order to our Salvation, as it was formerly to work Miracles, we ſhould ſtrengthen our ſelves more and more therein, and with the Apoſtles, beſeech the Lord to increaſe our Faith. IV. That being the Servants of God, we ought to do all that ſuch a Maſter commands us, and to do it with Zeal, and at the ſame time with deep Humility, remembring that we are but unworthy and unprofitable Servants, that we do no more than part of our Duty; that therefore we can plead no merit, and that if God vouchſafes to reward our Obedience, it is in Conſequence of his pure Favour and Bounty. V. The principal Reflexions that may be made upon the Cure of the Ten Lepers are, that there was but one who came back to thank Chriſt, and to give Glory to God; and further, that this Perſon was a *Samaritan*, and that he ſhewed more Piety and Gratitude than the reſt, who were *Jews*. Men wiſh to be deliver'd when they are in Pain or Sufferings, but as ſoon as they have obtained what they deſire, they preſently forget the Favour God has granted them, and become unthankful. Let us avoid ſuch a guilty Behaviour as that was. Let us be ſenſible of all the Mercies God beſtows upon us. Let us treaſure them up in our Remembrance, and ſhew our Acknowledgment and Love to Him, not only by continual Thankſgivings, but chiefly by our Obedience, and by the good Uſe we make of his Favours.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII. 20,——37.

1. THE *Phariſees* having asked Chriſt, when the Kingdom of God ſhould come; He tells them, that it would not be attended with worldly Pomp and Splendour, and even that it was already come, and that it was in the midſt of them, tho' they did not obſerve it. II. From hence He takes occaſion to warn thoſe that heard Him, not to follow the falſe Meſſiahs which would ariſe, telling them that there would come a Time, and quickly too, when they ſhould have reaſon to bewail the Advantages they then enjoy'd, of having the Meſſiah among them; and that the *Jews* ſhould be ſurpris'd and overwhelm'd by the Judgments of God, as Mankind was formerly by the Flood, and as were the Inhabitants of *Sodom*, by the Conflagration of their City.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE are to conſider here, I. What Chriſt ſaid to the *Jews*, that the Kingdom of God was not to come with Splendour, and that the ſaid Kingdom was already come, and that it was among them. This is enough to ſhew, that the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt* is altogether Spiritual and Heavenly; and that thoſe who, like us, are ſo happy as to have this Kingdom in the midſt of them, ſhould take care that they do not fall into the ſame Sin as did the *Jews*, which was, not to acknowledge their Happineſs, nor to make a right Uſe thereof, which nevertheleſs is but too uſual. For which purpoſe, let us conſider what our Lord adds in this Chapter, namely, that the *Jews* would ſoon repent their neglecting the

the Advantage of his Preſence, and that they would be overtaken by divine Vengeance, as the Inhabitants of the firſt World were by the Deluge, and as the Fire from Heaven overtook the People of *Sodom*. Theſe Warnings do likewiſe concern us; thoſe among us who ſhall have ſlighted the precious Advantages we enjoy, and the Seaſon of the Forbearance and Mercy of God, will be thus ſurpriz'd in their Blindneſs, and in their Security, and will periſh in their Impenitency. Since now our Lord has forewarned us of theſe Things, let us reflect upon them continually; and in the Expectation of his Coming, let us live in Watchfulneſs, in Prayer, and in the Exerciſe of all ſorts of good Works. May He himſelf grant us this Grace. *Amen*.

CHAP. XVIII. 1,——17.

I. OUR Lord propoſes the Parable of the unjuſt Judge. II. That of the Phariſee and the Publican. And, III. He lays his Hands upon little Children that were brought to Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. ST. *Luke* informs us, at the very entrance of this *Eighteenth* Chapter, that the end of the Parable of the unjuſt Judge, is to teach us, that we muſt always pray without being wearied. This is what we learn by our Saviour's Expreſſions, namely, that if Men, and even Men as wicked as that unjuſt Judge, ſuffer themſelves to be overcome at laſt by Prayers and repeated Sollicitations, God, who is Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs it ſelf, will much more hearken to the Prayers that are offer'd up to Him

Him with zeal and perſeverance. But the chief Aim of our Lord was, to convince us thereby, that God hears the Cries and Prayers of his Elect, and that He will take ſevere Vengeance on all ſuch as oppreſſed them unjuſtly. II. By the Parable of the Phariſee and the Publican, Chriſt would give us to underſtand, that ſuch who had a favourable Opinion of themſelves, like the *Phariſees*, and deſpiſed others, were very odious to the Lord, by reaſon of their Pride and Hypocriſie; and that thoſe who are looked upon as the greateſt Sinners, become the Objects of his Mercy, when they are penetrated with a profound Humility, and ſincere Repentance, as the Publican who is her mention'd, and who ſtanding afar off, *would not lift up ſo much as his Eyes unto Heaven, but ſmote upon his Breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a Sinner!* Beſides which, the Example of this *Phariſee*, who boaſted that he was neither an Extortioner, nor Unjuſt, nor an Adulterer; that he faſted twice a Week, and gave Tythes of all that he poſſeſſed, but who was not juſtified before God, proves, that Men may be free from great Crimes, and have even an appearance of Piety, and yet be rejected by God, if their Heart be filled with Pride, Covetouſneſs, or other Paſſions. III. And *Laſtly*, We may make three Obſervations upon our Lord's laying his Hands upon the Children that were brought to Him, and upon his praying for them. The *firſt* is, That the Age of little Children does not hinder our Lord from loving and bleſſing them. The *ſecond*, That in Devoting them to God by Prayer, and the Ordinance of Baptiſm, we conform our ſelves to what Chriſt did on this Occaſion. The *third*, That the Kingdom of God is only reſerv'd for ſuch as are Children in Innocence, Meekneſs, and Simplicity.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII. 18,——43.

I. OUR Lord returns an anſwer to a young Man, who asked Him, what he muſt do to be ſaved? From whence He takes Occaſion to ſay, that Riches would obſtruct the Salvation of many People; and He makes glorious Promiſes to thoſe that will forſake worldly Goods for the Love of Him. II. He foretels his Sufferings. And, III. He reſtores Sight to a blind Man near *Jericho*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WHAT we are to gather from the Diſcourſe between our Lord and the rich young Man, mention'd in this Chapter, is, that we can't obtain everlaſting Life but by keeping the Commandments of God; beſides which, there are certain Seaſons wherein we are bound to forſake all we have, and expoſe our ſelves to Poverty and Perſecution. The Surprize and Sorrow that ſeiz'd this young Man, after hearing what Chriſt had ſaid to him, ſhews, that the good Things of this Life are always a great Obſtacle to our Salvation, and as our Lord ſays, it is very hard for thoſe that be rich to enter into the Kingdom of God, becauſe they commonly ſet their Heart upon Riches. Let us make a good Uſe of this Warning, and if we be not called, as were the Apoſtles, to leave all Things to follow Chriſt, let us not cleave too cloſely to worldly Goods, but let us employ them in aſſiſting the Miſerable, and then we ſhall partake, both in this Life and the next, of the Rewards that our Saviour promiſes thoſe that ſhall have renounced the Love of Riches. II. It is next to be obſerved, that

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in Proportion to the approach of our Saviour's Death, He ſpoke more plainly of it to the Apoſtles, to the end that they ſhould be leſs ſurpris'd thereat; but the Apoſtles could not comprehend that He was to die, which proceded from the Prejudices and Opinion they had taken up, that, as the Meſſiah, He was to Reign glorioufly here upon Earth. III. It muſt, *Laſtly*, be obſerv'd upon the Healing the blind Man, that Chriſt wrought new Miracles towards the end of his Life, and as He drew near to *Jeruſalem*, in order to give freſh Proofs of his divine Miſſion to his Diſciples, and to the People; and in order alſo to leſſen the Offence which his Croſs and his Death was quickly to give them.

CHAP. XIX. 1,——28.

THIS Part of the Chapter comprehends two Heads. I. The Hiſtory of the Converſion of *Zaccheus*. II. The Parable of the ten Pieces of Money.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THERE are three Things chiefly to be obſerv'd upon the Hiſtory of *Zaccheus*. The *firſt*, That *Jeſus Chriſt* came to call Sinners to Repentance; and that thoſe Perſons whom the *Jews* look'd upon as great Sinners, and with whom they would keep no Correſpondence, ſuch, for inſtance, as the Publicans, ſhould be receiv'd into the Divine Covenant. The *ſecond*, That Chriſt communicates himſelf to thoſe that ſeek Him; and that when He offers himſelf to us, and calls us to Him, we ſhould obey his Call with readineſs and joy, as *Zaccheus* did. The *third*, That thoſe who

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are poſſeſs'd with ill-gotten Goods, ought to reſtore and put them away; and that the Rich are particularly obliged to be charitable to the Poor. II. As for the Parable of the Man that went a long Journey, and left ten Pounds, that's to ſay, ſeveral Sums of Money in the Hands of his Servants; our Lord propoſed it, as St. *Luke* obſerves, to undeceive thoſe that thought He was about to be declared King, and that his Kingdom would be manifeſted with Splendour in this World, and, on the contrary, to make them comprehend that He ſhould be rejected; but that however, ſuch as would not ſubmit themſelves to Him, ſhould feel the Effects of his Power, and undergo the Puniſhment of their Rebellion, whilſt thoſe that have ſerved Him faithfully ſhall be exalted to great Glory. The Uſe we are to make of this Parable, is to obſerve from thence, *firſt*, That God grants us his Light and Grace, to the end we may improve them to his Glory, and to the Salvation of other Men. *Secondly*, That ſome make a right Uſe of his Grace, and others abuſe it. *Thirdly*, That when our Lord ſhall come to judge Mankind, He will glorioufly reward thoſe that ſhall have employ'd his Gifts in the Manner the moſt conformable to his Intentions, but He will puniſh with rigour and juſtice too the Ingratitude and Treachery of thoſe that have abuſed them.

CHAP. XIX. 29,——48.

I. CHRIST makes his Entry into *Jeruſalem*. II. He weeps over the Deſtruction of that City. III. He drives out of the Temple thoſe that prophaned it.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. CHRIST was pleaſed to make his Entry into *Jeruſalem* the *Sunday* before his Death, to ſhew that He was that King, of whom the Prophets made mention; but He perform'd it after a very plain and ſimple Manner, riding upon a young Aſs, to the End that it might appear, that his Kingdom was not of this World. That which then happen'd, ought to have made ſo much the greater Impreſſion upon the Apoſtles, as they had ſeen, by what Chriſt told them concerning the Aſs, a new Proof of his infinite Knowledge. We ought very ſeriouſly to reflect upon this Event, in which we ſo ſenſibly perceive the Glory of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and at the ſame time his perfect Meekneſs, and it ſhould engage us to praiſe the Lord, as did thoſe who formerly attended Chriſt, that God has eſtabliſh'd his Kingdom, and ſent us the Redeemer of the World. II. We are next to obſerve, that when our Saviour came thus to *Jeruſalem*, He lamented with Tears the Deſolation of that City, and the Calamities that were about to fall upon the *Jews*, becauſe they had not known, but neglected, the Time wherein God had viſited them in Mercy, by the means of his Son. This was a very plain Proof of the Goodneſs of the Lord, even to ſuch as had rejected Him; and it ſhews us likewiſe, that no Body periſhes but through their own Fault, and becauſe they don't lay hold of the Seaſon in which God viſits them, and offers them his Grace; and that therefore we ſhould know the Things that belong to our Peace before they be hid from our Eyes. III. And, *Laſtly*, Chriſt, by driving out of the Temple thoſe that ſold and traded in it, made ap-

pear his Divine Authority, as well as his great Zeal. Let us conclude from thence, that we grievouſly offend God, and expoſe our ſelves to his Wrath, when we behave our ſelves irreverently in thoſe Places where He is publickly ſerved, and when we only pay Him a falſe and hypocritical Worſhip; this will be infinitely more odious to Him than the Abuſe that was introduced, and prevail'd among the *Jews*, of Buying and Selling, within the Precincts of the Temple, the Things that were neceſſary for ſacrificing.

CHAP. XX. 1,——18.

I. CHRIST anſwers the Chief among the *Jews*, who examin'd Him whence He had his Authority. And, II. propoſes to them the Parable of the Husbandmen.

Reflexions after the Reading.

UPON what we have heard, we are to remark, I. That when the *Jews* demanded of Chriſt, whence that Authority proceded which He aſcrib'd to Himſelf, He would not anſwer them directly, but contented himſelf with putting them to Silence, by asking whether the Baptiſm of *John* was from Heaven, or from Men? Our Lord ſpoke after this manner, becauſe, even tho' He ſhould have told them that his Authority was from Heaven, they would not have believ'd Him; however, He gave them to underſtand thereby, that He had receiv'd his Power and Calling from God, as well as *John* the Baptiſt, and that their Blindneſs was wilful. As for us, who believe that the Doctrine of *Jeſus Chriſt*, together with that of *John* the Baptiſt, was from God, we ſhould ren-

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der our ſelves guilty of a Rebellion yet more criminal than that of the *Jews*, if we did not ſubmit thereto. II. The Similitude of the Husbandmen ſignifies, that the *Jews*, after having rejected the Prophets that God had ſent them at ſeveral times, would crucifie his own Son; for which reaſon they would be deſtroyed, and deprived of the Benefit of the divine Covenant; that the *Gentiles* ſhould be receiv'd into it in their ſtead; and that *Jeſus Chriſt*, after having been rejected by the Chief of the *Jews*, would be inveſted with a ſupreme Power, and would exerciſe his Judgments upon their Nation. What this Parable typified, was accompliſh'd after the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of our Lord. *Jeruſalem* was deſtroy'd, and the *Gentiles* came into the Church. However, that which befel the *Jews*, ought to be an Example to us, and teach us, that God takes away his Grace and his Covenant from thoſe that abuſe them, ſince they don't leſs reject Chriſt, than the *Jews* themſelves did formerly.

CHAP. XX. 19,——47.

THIS Reading contains the Four following Heads. I. The Anſwer of *Jeſus Chriſt* to the Queſtion that was put, whether it were lawful to pay Tribute to the Emperor? II. His Anſwer to another Queſtion of the *Sadducees* about the Reſurrection. III. The Queſtion He put to the *Phariſees*, concerning the Meſſiah's being called the Son of *David*. IV. A Warning to take care of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Deſign of the *Phariſees* in asking our Saviour, whether it was lawful to pay Tribute to the Emperor, was to ſurprize and accuſe Him either of being the Emperor's Enemy, if He ſhould ſay that Tribute was not to be paid; or no Friend to his own Nation, if he ſhould ſay it was: But *Jeſus*, by an effect of his profound Wiſdom, diſcover'd and avoided the Snare, by bidding them *render to Ceſar the Things which be Ceſar's, and unto God the Things which be God's.* Let us learn from thence, to ſubmit our ſelves to the Authority of Princes, and to render them what is due to them; and at the ſame time religiouſly to diſcharge the Duties we lie under to God. II. We may obſerve the ſame Wiſdom of *Chriſt* in the Anſwer He return'd to the *Sadducees*, who thought to have entangled Him by the Queſtion they propoſed to Him about the Reſurrection. He ſhewed them that the Dead muſt riſe, by putting them in Mind, that God declares Himſelf the God of the Patriarchs, even after their Death, and of all ſuch as imitate their Faith; from whence it follows, that it is impoſſible they ſhould continue always under the Power of Death; and He added, that after the Reſurrection, good Men ſhould be immortal, and like to the Angels. This Diſcourſe of our Lord ought fully to convince us, that the Dead will be rais'd, and ſhould engage us to lead pure and godly Lives, to the end that we may become worthy to partake of Eternal Life, and of the Reſurrection of the Righteous. III. The Queſtion which Chriſt put to the *Phariſees*, how the Meſſiah could be both

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the Son and Lord of *David*, tended to make them ſenſible of their Ignorance, and to ſhew them the infinite Value of his Perſon; nevertheleſs He would not explain that Queſtion to them more fully, becauſe they would not have given credit to his Words. But it is plain to us, ſince we are aſſur'd that Chriſt as Man is *David*'s Son, and *David*'s Lord as He is the Son of God. IV. What our Saviour ſays againſt the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* ſhews, that Covetouſneſs, Pride, and Hypocriſie, are moſt odious Vices, and that we ought to beware of thoſe in whom they are found, and moſt carefully to avoid the ſame Vices our ſelves.

CHAP. XXI. 1,——19.

WHAT we are about to read here, contains Two Things. I. The Judgment which Chriſt paſſed upon the poor Widow's Offering. II. What He ſaid to his Diſciples concerning the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the End of the World.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Judgment which Chriſt pronounced upon the Offering of that Widow, who threw two ſmall Pieces of Money into a Box, in which private Perſons put what they had a Mind to give for the Service of the Temple, teaches us, that what we devote to pious and charitable Uſes, is pleaſing to God when given with a willing Mind; and that the Offerings of poor People, when made heartily, and according to their Power, are as well receiv'd as thoſe of the Rich. II. We are to conſider, that whatever our Lord had foretold, in mentioning the Signs that ſhould precede the

Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* and the Temple, came to paſs a few Years after. Several falſe Meſſiahs appear'd. *Judea* was ruined by War, by Famine, by Peſtilence, and by all kind of Plagues. The Diſciples of our Lord were perſecuted, but they were likewiſe peculiarly protected by Heaven, as Chriſt had promiſed them. Theſe Events will not ſuffer us to doubt of the Truth of the Goſpel, and of the Certainty of what is there ſaid about the ſecond Coming of *Jeſus Chriſt*, the laſt Judgment, and the End of the World. For which reaſon, we ought continually to meditate upon theſe Things, and by a conſtant Application to our Duty be prepar'd for them.

CHAP. XXI. 20,——38.

OUR Lord, after having ſpoken of thoſe Signs that were to appear before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, diſcourſes of the Deſtruction it ſelf. He repreſents how terrible it would be, and the Dread wherewith the *Jews* would be then ſeiz'd; He declares that theſe Things ſhould come to paſs before the Men of that Generation were all dead; Laſtly, He exhorts his Diſciples to watch, to pray, and to live temperately, to the end they might not be ſurpriz'd at his Coming.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WHAT we have read concerning the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, deſerves our utmoſt Attention. This Deſtruction happen'd according as our Lord had propheſied, and at the Time which He had ſhewn, that is to ſay, about forty Years after his Aſcenſion. The *Jews* found themſelves reduced to the greateſt Ex-

Extremities; they ſuffer'd all the Horrors of War; their City was taken by the *Romans*; they were put to the Edge of the Sword; the Remainder of that People were diſpers'd throughout the World, and we ſee, even to this Day, the *Jews* ſtill ſcatter'd through every Country, and the City remaining in its Ruins. Predictions ſo plain and ſo poſitive as theſe we have juſt now read, and which have been, and yet are ſo punctually verified by the Event, prove, after an invincible manner, that Chriſt was ſent from God, and that his Doctrine is both True and Divine. II. This Deſtruction of a Nation that was once ſo loved by God, and of a City He had choſen to eſtabliſh his Worſhip in, ought to inſpire us all with Fear, and it can be aſcribed to nothing but that Sin which the *Jews* committed, in Rejecting and Crucifying the Saviour of the World. Thereby we may diſcover what Chriſtians are to expect, who reject Him by their Unbelief and Diſobedience, and how great will be their Terror and Deſpair when He ſhall come again in his Glory. Wherefore, if we would ſhare in this Happineſs, and not be ſurpriz'd by that dreadful Day; let us improve the Advice of our Lord; let us avoid imbarking our ſelves in Senſuality, and in the Love of Pleaſures; baniſh from our Hearts the Cares of this Life; watch and pray continually. 'Tis what our Lord exhorts us to by the following Expreſſions, which conclude this Diſcourſe: *Take heed to your ſelves, leaſt at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs, and Cares of this Life, and ſo that Day come upon you unawares. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to eſcape all theſe things that ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of Man.*

CHAP. XXII. 1,——23.

THE Evangeliſt begins here the Hiſtory of Chriſt's Paſſions, and relates, I. The Bargain *Judas* made with the *Jews*, to deliver up our Lord to them. II. How Chriſt celebrated the Paſſover, and inſtituted the holy Supper. III. His Predictions of the Treachery of *Judas*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Reflexions that are to be made here relate, I. To the Agreement made by *Judas* with the *Jews*. II. To the Celebration of the Paſſover, and the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper. III. To the Foretelling the Crime of *Judas*. *Firſt* then, ſince it was Covetouſneſs that induced *Judas* to commit ſo perfidious an Action againſt his Maſter, it muſt be acknowledg'd that this Paſſion, which few People think to be of ſo evil a Conſequence, may draw Men into the worſt of Crimes; wherefore we ought to ſecure our ſelves againſt it with all the Care imaginable. Upon the *ſecond* Head, we are to obſerve, that as our Lord ſuffer'd Death at the Time of the Feaſt of the Paſſover, He thought fit then likewiſe to celebrate that Feaſt with his Diſciples, and to inſtitute the holy Supper, becauſe this Sacrament was to ſucceed and to take Place of the *Jewiſh* Paſſover; by which we ſee, of how great Importance that holy Ceremony was which our Lord then eſtabliſh'd, to remain, even to the End of the World, a Memorial of his Paſſion and Death; and with what Reverence, and with what Devotion we ought to partake of this holy Sacrament, as often as we approach the Lord's Table for that purpoſe.

purpoſe. *Thirdly*, Chriſt was pleaſed to declare, in the Preſence of his Diſciples, that one of them ſhould betray Him, to the end, that they might own thereafter, that nothing befel their Maſter which He had not foreſeen, and that He ſuffer'd Death voluntarily. From hence we may gather, that Chriſt had a perfect Knowledge of all Things, even of the Deſigns and Thoughts of Men; that therefore we cannot hide our ſelves from Him; and that it was the Love which He bore to us, that induc'd Him to undergo Death for our Salvation.

CHAP. XXII. 24,——46.

I. THE Apoſtles diſputing among themſelves who ſhould be the greateſt in that Kingdom, which they fancied Chriſt was going to eſtabliſh upon Earth, our Lord exhorts them to put away thoſe carnal Thoughts they had formed concerning the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, and to ſubſtitute in their ſtead more humble Sentiments; promiſing them nevertheleſs to exalt them to great Glory in his Kingdom. II. Chriſt foretels St. *Peter*'s Denial and Repentance; and warns his Diſciples that they ſhould from thenceforth be prepared to ſee Him ſuffer Death, and to be themſelves diſpers'd, and expoſed to divers Dangers and Wants; on which account it is, as He tells them, that if they had a Purſe, a Scrip, or a Sword, they ſhould take them. III. He goes to the Garden of *Gethſemane*, where He is in an extreme Agony.

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Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Leſſons of Humility, and Renunciation of worldly Greatneſs, which Chriſt gave his Apoſtles, teach us, that it is not lawful too greedily to ſeek after Honour and Glory; but, according to the Example of our Saviour, who was ſo Humble, and contented to live in ſo mean a Condition, we ought likewiſe to exerciſe great Humility, and to perſuade our ſelves, that the true Glory to which we ſhould aſpire, is that which Chriſt reſerves in the Kingdom of God, for ſuch as ſhall have been faithful to Him, and continued obedient in the midſt of thoſe Temptations and Trials to which they ſhall have been expoſed. II. We have ſeen how our Lord foretold that St. *Peter* would deny Him, and how He aſſured him at the ſame time, that He had prayed for him, to the end that his Faith ſhould not fail, and that he might riſe from his Fall. The Sequel confirm'd the Truth both of the Prediction and Promiſe. We ſee thereby that our Saviour knows all Things, and that He knows us better than we know our ſelves. This is likewiſe a Warning to us, not to rely upon our own Strength, but to pray to God that He would vouchſafe to ſecure us againſt our own Weakneſs, and ſupport us in ſuch manner, that our Faith may not fail. III. In the Relation St. *Luke* gives of the Condition of our Lord in the Garden, we may obſerve the great Sorrow of his Soul, his Prayers to God, and his Reſignation. His Anguiſh and Trouble ſhould make us reflect upon the Horror of Sin, and the ſad State of the Wicked, when they ſhall bear the Puniſhment due to their Crimes; his Prayers teach us to ſeek our Comfort and Strength, by ad-

addreſſing our ſelves to God under Affliction; and his Reſignation to the Will of his Father, ſhould teach us to ſubmit our ſelves in all Things, even in the ſoreſt Trials, to what God ſhall be pleaſed to do with us.

CHAP. XXII. 47,——72.

I. WE ſee here how our Lord was apprehended by *Judas*, and what paſſed upon that Occaſion. II. The Fall; And, III. the Repentance of St. *Peter*. IV. The Condemnation of Chriſt before the Council of the *Jews*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. UPON that which paſſed when Chriſt was taken in the Garden, we muſt obſerve, that tho' He knew the Deſign of *Judas*, and tho' He could have eſcap'd Death, yet He deliver'd Himſelf into the Hands of the *Jews*, being reſolv'd to die, that He might accompliſh the Deſigns of God his Father. II. The Action of St. *Peter*, who ſmote with a Sword one of the Servants of the High Prieſt, ſhews the Zeal and Concern of that Apoſtle for his Maſter, but it proceded likewiſe from Raſhneſs, and a Spirit of Revenge, on which Account our Lord blam'd him for it. This teaches us, that Deeds of Violence and Anger, are unworthy the Diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt*; wherefore we ought to ſhun them, and always imitate the great Meekneſs and Patience of our Saviour, who being able to puniſh thoſe that came to take Him, and to defend himſelf againſt their Attempts, would not do it, but even gave a Proof of his Goodneſs and Mildneſs, as well as of his Power, by healing the Perſon St. *Peter* had wounded. III. The Fall of that Apoſtle, who,

who, after having ſhewed ſo much Zeal, deny'd his Maſter, is a great Example, by which thoſe even that are never ſo piouſly and well inclined, ought to take Warning. Let us be ſenſible of our Weakneſs; let us fortifie our ſelves againſt our Inconſtancy, and againſt Temptations, by Watchfulneſs and Prayer; and when we happen to fall at any time, let us riſe again, as St. *Peter* did, by a ſpeedy and lively Repentance, and by ſincere Amendment of Life. IV. The Relation of Chriſt's Appearance before the Council of the *Jews*, ſhews, that He was not condemned for any Crime, and that He was wholly innocent, ſince the Sentence of his Condemnation was only grounded upon what He himſelf had ſaid, that He was the Son of God. However, He own'd the ſame, and ſubmitted to ſo unrighteous a Judgment; whereby He has given us the moſt convincing Proof imaginable of his Love, and an Example of Zeal and Patience, which we ought always to ſet before our Eyes.

CHAP. XXIII. 1,—25.

I. CHRIST appears, and is accuſed before *Pilate*, and afterwards before *Herod*. II. By both whom He is declared innocent. III. *Pilate* endeavours to deliver Him: But, IV. being overcome by the Inſtances of the *Jews*, he condemns Him to Death.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE muſt have obſerv'd at firſt ſight, the Injuſtice and Rage of the *Jews*, in the falſe Accuſation they brought againſt Chriſt, of having deſign'd to raiſe a Sedition among the People, and to cauſe Himſelf to be declared

ted King; and by their preſſing to have Him put to Death, in ſpight of all that *Pilate* could ſay to pacifie them, inſomuch, that they choſe rather to ſave the Life of a Murtherer and a Rebel. II. We find by this Hiſtory, that the Innocence of Chriſt was own'd both by *Herod* and *Pilate*, and that the latter of them endeavour'd to deliver Him. III. It is to be obſerved, that when our Saviour appeared before *Herod*, He did not ſpeak to him, nor return him any Anſwer, becauſe the Queſtions that Prince put to Him did not proceed from any deſign of being better inform'd by Him, but from a vain Curioſity, and deſire of ſeeing ſome Miracles wrought by Him. God does not manifeſt Himſelf but to ſuch as ſeek for the Truth in Faithfulneſs, but He leaves the Wicked in their Blindneſs. IV. And above all, we ought to obſerve the Injuſtice of *Pilate*, who being convinced that Chriſt was wrongfully accuſed, condemned Him in Complaiſance to the *Jews*, after having reſiſted a while. This is the manner of unjuſt Judges, and in general, of all thoſe that ſin againſt Light, and who have more regard and conſideration for Men, and for the Motives of Policy, Intereſt, and Ambition, than to what God, Juſtice and Conſcience requite. This Example likewiſe ſhews, that it is to no purpoſe to have a few right Sentiments, and a faint Deſire of doing our Duty, and even to withſtand Temptation for a Time, if we give way to it at laſt. Upon all Occaſions therefore we are bound to oppoſe wicked Men, and diſcharge our Duty, by purſuing with Courage and Steadineſs the Motions of our Conſciences, without turning aſide for any Sollicitations, or other Reaſons whatſoever.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII. 26,——56.

WE have here the Hiſtory of the Paſſion of our Saviour; where we ſee, I. That which happen'd when He was led to Puniſhment, and whilſt He was upon the Croſs, and Dying. II. The Prodigies that happen'd thereupon. III. His Burial.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THESE are the Obſervations which we may make upon the ſeveral Circumſtances of our Lord's Paſſion. I. We may ſee by what He ſaid to the Women of *Jeruſalem*, who were weeping for Him, that at the very Time when they led Him to Puniſhment, and ſo unjuſtly put Him to Death, He was more ſenſible of the Calamities that were coming upon the *Jews*, than of his own Sufferings. This is a moſt pathetick Example of Meekneſs and Patience, and ought to convince us of the perfect Charity of Chriſt, and induce us to pardon thoſe who uſe us unjuſtly, and to be more concern'd for others than for our ſelves. II. This Prayer which Chriſt made at the Time of his Crucifixion, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*, ought to inſpire us with the like noble Sentiments. III. Another Circumſtance, and which is worthy of our Attention, is what St. *Luke* relates about the two Thieves that were crucified with our Saviour. In one of them, we ſee a terrible Obdurateneſs, which ſhews how far Men may carry Impiety and Wickedneſs; but in the other, who reproved his Companion, and called upon *Jeſus* as his Saviour and King, though he ſaw Him nailed to the Croſs, we may remark a wonderful Faith, a hearty

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Repentance, and a deep Humility. In the Promiſe our Lord made Him: *This Day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradice*, we have an inſtance of God's Mercy to penitent Sinners, which, however, muſt not be abus'd. This Promiſe does likewiſe aſſure us, that thoſe who die in the Favour of God, do enter into a State of Happineſs immediately after their Death. IV. Chriſt's Death and Burial are to be conſidered as the laſt Degree of his Humiliation, and the Accompliſhment of the Sacrifice which He offer'd to God for the Attonement of our Sins. Thus we find therein the Foundation of our Faith and Confidence, and powerful Motives not to fear Death. *Laſtly*, We are to conſider, that the ſeveral Prodigies which happen'd whilſt our Lord was upon the Croſs, were deſign'd to ſhew, that He was really the Son of God; but this is what appeared yet more plainly afterwards, when He aroſe on the third Day after his Death.

CHAP. XXIV.

I. THIS Chapter teaches us, that Chriſt being riſen, appeared to the Women that went to his Sepulchre. II. And again, to Two of his Diſciples as they were going to *Emmaus*. III. And at laſt, to other Apoſtles. IV. St. *Luke* concludes his Goſpel, in relating the laſt Orders which our Lord gave his Apoſtles, and his Aſcenſion.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have heard, I. How Chriſt being riſen, ſhewed Himſelf to the Women that went to his Sepulchre. II. After that, to the two Diſciples. III. And *Laſtly*, to all his Diſciples; who were entirely ſatisfied of his Reſurrection, by touching his Body, and ſeeing Him eat in their Preſence. Theſe ſeveral Apparitions of our Lord, prove that He is riſen, and ought powerfully to ſtrengthen our Faith and our Hopes, which are all built upon this Reſurrection. In the Diſcourſe which our Saviour had with the two Diſciples in the Way to *Emmaus*, we may perceive, that though they preſerved a tender Remembrance of their Maſter, and that they had even ſome hopes of his Riſing again, their Faith was as yet very weak; which proves that they did not believe the Reſurrection but upon ſure Grounds, nor till they were fully convinced thereof. On the other Hand, we obſerve, that Chriſt inſtructed them upon the Myſtery of his Death and Reſurrection, by explaining the Prophets that made mention thereof. This ſhould induce us to read and meditate upon the Oracles of the Prophets, ſince we find therein Predictions ſo proper to confirm us in the Faith, eſpecially ſince the Event has perfectly cleared up and verified the ſaid Oracles. In the laſt Commands that Chriſt left with his Diſciples, we find an Abſtract of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, which may be reduced to this: That *Jeſus Chriſt* died; that He roſe again, and that He ſent his Apoſtles to declare throughout the World the Remiſſion of Sins, and to perſuade Men

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to repent. *Laſtly*, The Aſcenſion of our Lord ought fully to convince us that He is the Son of God, and engage us to worſhip, and to ſubmit our ſelves to Him, and to rejoice continually, whilſt we reflect on the Glory to which He is exalted at the right Hand of his Father, and in the Hopes of being there admitted one Day our ſelves. Let us all beſeech Him to grant us this Grace. *Amen.*

St. JOHN.

CHAP. I. 1,——18.

THE Goſpel according to St. *John*, was writ a long Time after the other Goſpels, and, as it is thought, near a Hundred Years after the Birth of Chriſt; for which reaſon it is, that we ſee ſeveral Things therein which are not related by the other Evangeliſts. In that Part of the firſt Chapter we are about to read, St. *John* teaches, that *Jeſus Chriſt* is God, that He is made Man by taking our Nature, and that He is come into the World to ſave Mankind, and to render all thoſe that believe in Him the Children of God.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT has been read, inſtructs us in two Things; to wit, I. In the infinite Worth of the Perſon of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the End for which He came into the World. As for his Per-

Perſon, St. *John* teaches us, that *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is here called the Word, is God, and that this Word was made Fleſh, that is to ſay, it was made Man, and aſſumed our Nature; he ſays moreover, that our Lord was much more Excellent than his forerunner, *John* the Baptiſt, who was ſent from God to make Him known to the *Jews*. This obliges us to look upon Chriſt as our Saviour, and as our God, to receive his Doctrine as Heavenly and Divine, and to acknowledge how much God has loved us, in having given us his own Son for our Redemption. II. We have ſeen for what purpoſe Chriſt came into the World, namely, to be the Light of the World, to enlighten Mankind with the Knowledge of God, and to purchaſe for them the Right of becoming his Children; but we have likewiſe learned, that this Benefit is reſerved only for thoſe that believe in Him, and who are truly born of God. Thereby we ſee how great is the Excellence of the Goſpel, and the Obligation we lie under of receiving with Faith and Thankſgiving that wholſome Doctrine preached by the only Son of God. Let us make a better Uſe of it than did the *Jews*, of whom St. *John* ſays: *He came to his own, but his own received Him not.* Let us ſhew, by our adherence to Chriſt, and by our Obedience, that we are of the Number of thoſe who have received Him and believed in his Name. 'Tis thus we ſhall arrive at the Happineſs and Glory of being the Children of God, and thereby of obtaining the Inheritance of Eternal Life.

CHAP. I. 19,——51.

ST. *John* relates here, I. The Teſtimony which *John* the Baptiſt render'd to our Lord, by diſcloſing to the *Jews* the Dignity of his Perſon, and the Nature and End of his Miniſtry. II. How our Lord made himſelf known to *Andrew*, *Peter*, *Philip*, and *Nathaniel*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WHAT we are to conſider in general upon the Witneſs which *John* the Baptiſt bore to our Lord is, that God ſent this holy Prophet to make Chriſt known to the *Jews*, and to diſpoſe them to look upon Him, not as a Temporal King, but as a Spiritual one, and as a Saviour that ſhould attone for the Sins of Mankind, and would pour upon them the Gifts of the Spirit of God. 'Tis for this Reaſon, that *John* the Baptiſt ſaid: *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World.* And, *This is He which Baptizeth for the Holy Ghoſt.* The Pardon of Sins, and the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, which regenerates and ſanctifies us, are therefore the two principal Graces that Chriſt has acquired for us, and to which we are bound to aſpire. We ought likewiſe to obſerve the Humility, Zeal, and Faithfulneſs which *John* the Baptiſt exerted, by owning that he was not the Meſſiah, but only his Forerunner, and by abaſing himſelf ſo much below *Jeſus Chriſt*. Thus we ought likewiſe to entertain humble Sentiments of our ſelves, never ſeek our own Glory, but that of Chriſt alone; and to labour every one in his Calling, and to the utmoſt of his Power, to make Him known

to

to Men, and to bring them to Him. II. We ſee how *Jeſus Chriſt*, as ſoon as ever He entred upon his Miniſtry, made choice of his Diſciples; He did ſo, becauſe He deſign'd to make uſe of them in Preaching the Goſpel throughout the World, and to the end they might bear witneſs to his Life, his Doctrine, his Miracles, his Death and Reſurrection. The great Joy that theſe firſt Apoſtles felt for having found the Meſſiah, and their earneſtneſs to follow Him, teaches us, that our greateſt Happineſs is to know Chriſt, and inviolably to adhere to Him. What is related of *Nathaniel*, and the Teſtimony Chriſt gave of Him, by ſaying, *Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom is no guile*, ought to be well obſerved. By that we ſee our Lord had a perfect Knowledge of all Things, and particularly of the Heart of Man, and that the Qualities which He chiefly conſiders, and which He expects in his Diſciples, is Purity of Heart, an upright Intention, a great Averſion to Hypocriſie, and a ſincere Love to Truth and Holineſs.

CHAP. II.

HERE is the Subſtance of this Chapter: I. Chriſt changes Water into Wine at the Marriage in *Canaan*. II. He goes to *Jeruſalem*, and drives out of the Temple thoſe that prophaned it. III. He works ſome Miracles in that City at the Feaſt of the Paſſover.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Miracle that Chriſt wrought, by changing Wine into Water, at the Marriage of *Cana*, has this remarkable Circumſtance, that it was his firſt Miracle, and that

He began by that to manifeſt his divine Power and Calling in Preſence of the bleſſed Virgin his Mother, of his Diſciples, and ſeveral other Perſons, which cauſed his Fame to be ſpread throughout *Galilee*, and his Diſciples to believe on Him. II. We ſee that Chriſt being arriv'd at *Jeruſalem*, drove from the Temple thoſe who bought and ſold there. He did the ſame Thing three Years after, and a little before his Death. This was a publick Token which He was pleaſed to give, at the very Beginning of his Miniſtry, of his Divine Authority, and of his great Zeal; which was likewiſe owned by the Apoſtles, by their applying to Him theſe Words: *The Zeal of thy Houſe has eaten me up.* What we may learn from thence is, to be filled with great Zeal for the Glory of God, to oppoſe every thing that is contrary thereto, and to ſhew a Reſpect for the Places that are devoted to the Service of God, and in general, for all that belongs to Religion. It is to be obſerv'd, that the *Jews* required of Chriſt ſome Proofs of his Authority, whereupon He told them: *Deſtroy this Temple, and I will build it again in three Days.* By which He meant, that the ſtrongeſt Proof He could give of himſelf was, that He would riſe from the Dead upon the third Day; but He ſpoke in figurative and dark Terms, it not being proper as yet to ſpeak more plainly concerning his Death and Reſurrection. III. The laſt Thing St. *John* relates here is, that ſeveral People believed in *Jeſus* when they ſaw the Miracles He did. But that *Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them, becauſe He knew all Men:* —— And *knew what was in Man.* We ought carefully to attend to this Place, where it is ſaid, that Chriſt knows all Men, and all that paſſes in their Hearts; and particularly, that He does not look upon all thoſe

thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians to be his true Diſciples. Thus we muſt not pretend to be acceptable to Him, unleſs the Profeſſion we make of Believing in Him be ſincere, nor unleſs we ſhew the Truth of it by our Obedience.

CHAP. III. 1,——21.

IN the firſt Part of this Chapter, St. *John* relates, I. The Diſcourſe between *Jeſus Chriſt* and *Nicodemus*; in which, under the Type of a ſecond Birth, and of Water, He ſhews, that Men muſt be wholly renewed, and inwardly ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, if they would become his Diſciples, and enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. II. Next He makes mention, after a figurative Manner, of his Death. He informs him of the Deſign of his Coming into the World, and ſhews what is the Cauſe of the Unbelief and Perdition of Men.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. LET us learn from the Diſcourſe that Chriſt held with *Nicodemus*, that carnal Men cannot enter into the Kingdom of God; and that, in order to be admitted there, we muſt become new Creatures, and entertain Thoughts and Inclinations that will lead us to the Knowledge of Truth, and to the Enquiry after ſpiritual Things. This may likewiſe teach us, that ſince 'tis by the means of the Spirit of God that we are to be thus regenerated, we ought to implore fervently and continually the Grace of that Holy Spirit, and to make a right Uſe of it when God ſhall grant it to us. II. Chriſt gives us here an Abſtract of the Goſpel, in ſaying, that: *God ſo loved the World,*

that He gave his only begotten Son, to the end, that whoſoever believeth in Him may not periſh, but have everlaſting Life. Theſe Words, and thoſe which Chriſt adds, ſhew moſt plainly, that the Gift which God has made to Mankind of his Son, is the greateſt Token He ever gave them of his Love; that Faith in Chriſt is the only Means of being ſaved; and if there be any who do not believe, but reject the Light of the Goſpel, it only proceeds from their being addicted to Sin, and from a Heart depraved and corrupted by Paſſions. From whence we ought to conſider, of how great Importance it is to diveſt our ſelves of our Paſſions, and to purifie our Hearts with a ſincere Love of Truth and Virtue.

CHAP. III. 22,——36.

JOHN the Baptiſt having been informed by his Diſciples, that a great Number of People follow'd Chriſt, ſhews great Joy thereat, and declares openly that Chriſt was infinitely more worthy than he, that he was the Son of God, and that none but ſuch as believed in Him could be ſaved.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have heard the Teſtimony that *John* the Baptiſt gave of our Lord, by a publick Confeſſion that *Jeſus* was greater than he, and how great Satisfaction he conceiv'd when he was informed that the Glory of our Saviour began to ſpread it ſelf. Theſe are Arguments of the Humility and Zeal of that faithful Forerunner of the Meſſiah; and 'tis thus likewiſe that we ought always to bear witneſs to the Truth, and to ſeek not our own Glory, but that

of

of our Saviour, in ſuch manner, that the Advancement of his Kingdom, and the Salvation of Men, ſhould be the principal Object of our Wiſhes, and beget in us the greateſt Joy. We learn further from this Diſcourſe of *John* the Baptiſt, that Chriſt being the Son of God, and having received from his Father a Power without Bounds, it is only by Faith, and by a ſincere Obedience to his Doctrine, that we can obtain Salvation; and that thoſe who diſobey Him, continue in Condemnation and in Death. This is what is expreſſed in the laſt Verſe of this Chapter, by theſe Words, which contain the Subſtance of the Chriſtian Doctrine: *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting Life; and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee Life; but the Wrath of God abideth in him.*

CHAP. IV.

I. CHRIST going from *Judea* to *Galilee*, and paſſing through *Samaria*, diſcourſes with a *Samaritan* Woman, and makes himſelf known to her; upon which ſhe believed on Him, as well as ſeveral other *Samaritans*. II. Arriving in *Galilee*, He heals the Son of a Nobleman of that Country. For the better Underſtanding this Chapter, it muſt be obſerved, that the *Samaritans* were originally partly *Jews*, and partly *Gentiles*; that they worſhiped the true God in a Temple built upon the Mountain of *Gerizim*, but that they did not ſerve Him in the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, nor after the manner which He required; upon which Account, there was always Enmity between them and the *Jews*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt Reflexion that is to be made here is, that Chriſt, by an effect of his Goodneſs and Wiſdom, meeting with a *Samaritan* Woman near a Well, made uſe of that Occaſion to inſtruct her, and to bring her to the Knowledge of the Truth, by ſpeaking to her concerning Himſelf and his Doctrine under a Type of Water. The manner in which our Lord mention'd to her this ſpiritual Water, and the wholſome Effects which it produces, is a Leſſon to us, that the Knowledge and Grace of *Jeſus Chriſt* is the moſt precious Gift that God ever gave to Men, and what we ought to deſire with the greateſt Fervency. II. The ſecond Inſtruction is, that the Grace of God and his Covenant, is no longer appropriated to one Nation, or to one peculiar Place, as was pretended both by the *Jews* and *Samaritans*; but that all Men without diſtinction may partake thereof; and that the true Worſhip which God requires of us is, that as He *is a Spirit, they that worſhip Him, muſt worſhip Him in Spirit and in Truth.* III. We ſee that the Diſciples of our Lord urging Him to take ſome Food, were anſwer'd by Him: *My Meat is to do the Will of Him that ſent me.* And that they ſhould diſpoſe themſelves to labour, as He did, in the Converſion of Sinners; which, to make them comprehend the better, He uſes the Similitude of an approaching Harveſt. Let us gather from thence, that there is nothing in which we ought to take greater Pleaſure and Satisfaction, than to do the Will of God; and it is thus that all of us ought to employ our ſelves with the utmoſt Zeal. IV. The Converſion of the *Samaritan* Woman, and ſeveral of the Inhabi-

tants

tants of the Town of *Sychar*, is an event which ſhewed, that the Meſſiah did not come for the ſake of the *Jews* only; but that other Nations likewiſe were about to be admitted into the Divine Covenant. This Converſion, and the Eagerneſs of the Woman to inform the Inhabitants of her Town of what had happened, and to bring them to Chriſt, is a Leſſon alſo to us, that we ſhould receive with readineſs the Goſpel when it is preached to us, and moreover, to contribute all that in us lies to bring over our Neighbour to the Faith, by our Exhortations, and by our good Examples. *Laſtly*, St. *John* teaches us, that Chriſt being returned into *Galilee*, heals there the Son of a Nobleman by his Word only, and tho' the ſick Man himſelf was abſent. Thus our Lord thought fit to give new Examples of his Power and Goodneſs in that Country, to the end that He might make himſelf known to the *Jews*, and to induce them to believe in Him.

CHAP. V. 1,——14.

CHRIST cures a Man that had been afflicted with the Palſie for the Space of Thirty eight Years.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE diſcover, I. In the Cure of the Paralitical Perſon, whoſe Hiſtory St. *John* gives us here, the wonderful Power of our Lord, who, by his Word only, entirely cured a Man that had loſt the Uſe of his Limbs for ſo many Years, which was as great a Miracle as that which was done at the Pool of *Bethesda* by the means of an Angel. II. We ſee that the Lord took Compaſſion on this Paralitical Man, by asking

asking him, whether he deſired to be healed, and at the ſame time actually healing him after an unexpected manner. By that we may obſerve, that this charitable Saviour is always diſpoſed to communicate his Goodneſs to Men, and to deliver them from their Miſeries; that He even prevents them, and offers his Favours to them; but it likewiſe ſhews, that no Body is admitted to partake of them but thoſe who deſire them, and who, like the Paralitical Man, lay hold of thoſe Offers which Chriſt ſo graciouſly makes them. III. We ſhould carefully attend to that which Chriſt ſaid to this ſick Man: *Behold, thou art made whole, ſin no more, leaſt a worſe thing come unto thee.* This is a Warning to thoſe whom God has deliver'd from any Infirmity, or any other Misfortune, that they ſhould ſhew their Gratitude to Him, and eſpecially avoid, for the Time to come, falling into Sin, for fear of obliging God to puniſh them more ſeverely, not only in this Life, but even in that to come.

CHAP. V. 15,——47.

THIS is a Diſcourſe, by which Chriſt ſhews the *Jews* that they were in the wrong in being offended at his healing the Paralitical Man upon the Sabbath Day, and at his aſſertion, that God was his Father. And here follows the Subſtance thereof. I. Our Lord acquainted the *Jews*, that He wrought his Miracles by the Power of God; that they ought not to be ſurpriz'd at his attributing to himſelf ſo much Authority, and for calling God his Father; that He would do greater Miracles thereafter; and that He would raiſe the Dead; that He would Judge the World; that He would beſtow Eternal Life upon ſuch as believed

lieved in Him; and condemn all thoſe that ſhould reject Him. II. Chriſt adds, that He did not deſire to be believed upon his bare Word that He was ſent by God; that the *Jews* might ſatisfie themſelves by the Teſtimony that *John* the Baptiſt bore Him, and which had great Weight with them; by the Miracles He wrought, and by the Oracles of *Moſes* and the Prophets. III. He complains of the Unbelief of the *Jews*, who would not have recourſe to Him to obtain everlaſting Life, and tells them, that this Unbelief proceded from Hearts void of the Love of God, and full of Self-love, and of the Glory of the World.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS whole Diſcourſe, in which Chriſt proves to the *Jews*, by ſeveral Arguments, that He was ſent from God, ſhews us, that our Faith was built upon ſolid Reaſons, and upon convincing and inconteſtable Proofs; to fortifie our ſelves therefore in the Faith, we ought ſeriouſly to weigh theſe Proofs which Chriſt alledged to the *Jews*, and to add to them thoſe which the *Jews* had not at that time, and which are drawn from the Reſurrection of our Saviour; from the Eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian Religion; and from the Teſtimony of the Apoſtles. Beſides this general Obſervation, we may make the three following particular ones upon this Diſcourſe of Chriſt. I. That God gave our Lord an unlimitted Power, which, as He exerted formerly in doing Miracles, He will diſplay yet more pompouſly when He ſhall come to raiſe the Dead, and to Judge all Men, both Righteous and Wicked. We ought therefore to revere this Power, to honour the Son of God, as we honour God his Father, and to obey

bey Him, to the end, that we may be raiſed one Day to Life Eternal, but not to Condemnation. II. Since Chriſt alledges the Teſtimony of the holy Scriptures, and of *Moſes*; and He exhorts the *Jews* to ſearch and examine them; it follows, that we ought often to read, and carefully to meditate upon the Writings of the Old Teſtament as well as thoſe of the New, ſince 'tis the Way to obtain everlaſting Life. III. What Chriſt ſaid to the *Jews* about their Unbelief, and the Cauſes thereof, is a Leſſon to us, that if there be any People that will not come to our Lord to obtain Life, and if there be any that periſh, the reaſon is, that they have not the Love of God in them, and that their Hearts are poſſeſſed by their Paſſions. Above all, Chriſt declares that the Love of the World and his Glory, and the Deſire to be approved and well ſpoken of by Men, is one of the greateſt Impediments to Faith and Salvation.

CHAP. VI. 1,——21.

THIS is a Relation of two Miracles of our Saviour. I. That of his Feeding five Thouſand Perſons with five Loaves and two Fiſhes. And, II. that of Calming a Tempeſt.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE miraculous Manner in which our Lord fed the People that followed Him, is ſo much the more an illuſtrious Proof of his ſupream Power, as there were ſeveral Thouſands of Perſons who were both Witneſſes of this Miracle, and who might ſatisfie themſelves of the Truth thereof, by eating of thoſe Loaves and Fiſhes which Chriſt had multiplied. II. We may obſerve that thoſe People were ſo affected with this Miracle, that they not only

affirmed that Chriſt was the Prophet, and the Meſſiah whom the *Jews* expected, but they would likewiſe have declared Him King; for which reaſon, He withdrew to a ſolitary Place; being unwilling that any Sedition or Commotion ſhould be rais'd for his ſake. This Proceeding of the *Jews*, was an effect of the Opinion they had taken up, that the Meſſiah was to be a Temporal King; but the Retreat of Chriſt ſhewed, that his Kingdom was not of the Earth; which ſhould teach us, not to ſeek our Happineſs and our Glory in this World, and above all, to ſhun the Pomp and Splendour of the World, and to keep our ſelves always in great Humility. III. In the other Miracle that happen'd, when the Apoſtles were in danger of being Shipwrack'd, we may obſerve ſhining Marks of the Power of Chriſt, ſince He came to them walking upon the Water, and that by his Word only the Storm was aſſwaged. The Care which our Lord had of his Apoſtles, and the Love which He bore them, appears likewiſe in this Event, and we may from thence draw Motives of Truſt and Confidence in the midſt of all thoſe Dangers and Neceſſities to which we may be expoſed.

CHAP. VI. 22,——40.

I. OUR Lord and Saviour having miraculouſly fed the People with five Loaves and two Fiſhes, and obſerving their Eagerneſs in following Him, takes occaſion from thence, to exhort them to ſeek for ſpiritual Food, and ſuch as would make them live for ever, rather than for the Suſtenance of a periſhable Body. II. He tells them next, that He was that Food, and the Bread of Heaven, and that

thoſe who eat of that Bread ſhould attain everlaſting Life.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE chief Inſtruction this Diſcourſe of our Saviour furniſhes us with is, to labour much more earneſtly to procure that Food that cauſes Men to live for ever, rather than that which only ſerves to ſupport a temporal and fading Life. And ſince our Lord has told us ſo plainly, that He himſelf is this heavenly Bread, and that this Food of the Soul is only to be found in Him, and in his Goſpel, let us beſeech Him to give us always of that Bread. Let us receive with Gratitude that Food which He offers us with ſo much Goodneſs in his Word; let us ſubmit our ſelves to his Doctrine and divine Precepts, and embrace with Faith theſe ſo comfortable Promiſes which He makes us, that He will not reject thoſe that come to Him, and the Aſſurances which He gives us, that: *This is the Will of Him that ſent me, that every one that ſeeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlaſting Life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day.*

CHAP. VI. 41,——72.

I. OUR Lord continues to diſcourſe of ſpiritual Food, and explains what He had ſaid, and what the *Jews* had not underſtood; namely, that He was the Bread which came down from Heaven. He ſays, that this Food was his Fleſh and his Blood, which He would give for the Life of the World, by which He hinted at his own Death; but He expreſſed himſelf figuratively, and ſomewhat obſcurely, becauſe it was not yet ſeaſonable for Him open-

openly to declare that He ſhould be put to Death. II. Some of his Diſciples being offended at this Diſcourſe, Chriſt tells them that his Word is to be underſtood in a ſpiritual Senſe; but that did not hinder ſeveral among them from forſaking Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Diſcourſe of our Saviour, had ſomething of Obſcurity in it when He ſpake it; we may have obſerv'd, that the *Jews* could not conceive how Chriſt was that Bread that deſcended from Heaven, and how it was neceſſary to eat his Fleſh and drink his Blood, in order to obtain everlaſting Life; but to us Chriſtians, this ought to be very clear, foraſmuch as we know that the Death of *Jeſus Chriſt* is the true Food of the Soul, and the only Principle of ſpiritual Life and Immortality; that the Words of our Saviour are Spirit and Life; that is to ſay, they are to be underſtood after a ſpiritual manner; and that to eat the Fleſh of Chriſt, and drink his Blood, means nothing elſe, as He himſelf explains it in this Chapter, but to come to Him, and to believe in Him. Only it is neceſſary that this Faith ſhould be ſincere, and attended with Love, Truſt, and Obedience, and that it ſhould unite us ſo cloſely to Chriſt, that nothing ſhould be able to ſeparate us from Him. The Queſtion which our Lord put to his Apoſtles, whether they would likewiſe forſake Him, as divers of his Diſciples had done, and the Anſwer St. *Peter* return'd Him, oblige us to conſider, that Chriſt forces none into his Service; that the Obedience He requires, is free and voluntary; that however we ought never to leave Him, ſince He only has the Words of eternal

Life; and that being the Son of the Living God, He is the ſole Author of Salvation. The laſt Words of this Chapter, where it is ſaid, that *Jeſus* knew from the beginning that *Judas*, who was of the Number of the Twelve Apoſtles, would betray Him, teach us, that our Lord knows all thoſe that call themſelves his Diſciples, and that He diſcerns them who don't believe in Him, from ſuch as are faithful to Him; upon which, all of us ought to make the moſt ſerious Reflexions. An external Profeſſion of Chriſtianity is not ſufficient, and there is nothing but a true Faith, and ſteddy Obedience, that can ſecure our Heart before God, and make us accepted by Him, who ſees the Hearts of all Men, and who will render to them all according to their Works.

CHAP. VII. 1,——30.

I. ST. *JOHN* relates here, a Journey that Chriſt made to *Jeruſalem* on account of the Feaſt of Tabernacles. II. The different Judgments that Men paſſed upon Him. And, III. his Anſwer to the *Jews*, who found fault with Him for his having cured a Paralitical Perſon ſome Months before, at the Feaſt of the Paſſover, and upon a Sabbath-Day.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt Thing to be obſerved in this Chapter is, that our Lord refuſed to go publickly to *Jeruſalem*, and in the Company of his Relations; He acted thus out of Prudence, that He might avoid all Pomp, and that He might not be expoſed to the Rage of the *Jews*, who ſought to put Him to Death. That which He ſaid to his Relations: That *the World*, that

that is to ſay, the *Jews, cannot hate you, but me it hateth, becauſe I teſtifie of it, that the Works thereof are Evil*; contains a perpetual and general Truth; namely, that worldly People love thoſe that are like them, but hate thoſe whoſe Lives and Speeches condemn their wicked Actions. II. We ſee here the various Judgments the People made upon Chriſt; but above all, we may obſerve the Blindneſs and Malice of the *Jews*, who, without minding the Proofs which our Lord gave of his Divine Miſſion, accuſed Him of breaking the Law of God, by healing a Paralitical Perſon on a Sabbath-Day, for which they would even have put Him to Death. This procedure of the *Jews* ſhews, that Prejudice and Paſſion may blind Men to ſuch a Degree that nothing can undeceive them, and that they are even brought to condemn Actions that are altogether holy and praiſe-worthy. But it likewiſe appears from this Hiſtory, that the *Jews* could do no harm to our Lord, tho' they deſign'd it, and that no Body durſt lay Hands on Him. 'Tis thus that God can ſtop the Attempts of the Wicked, and protect thoſe that ſerve Him faithfully. III. We ought to be affected at the Wiſdom and Strength which appears in what Chriſt ſaid to the *Jews*, to juſtifie what He had done, and to convince them that his Doctrine was Heavenly and Divine; as alſo at the Moderation with which He anſwer'd them, when they accuſed Him of being poſſeſs'd with a Devil. In the laſt Place, we have here an Example of Patience and Meekneſs, to which we ſhould endeavour to conform our ſelves. Among the ſeveral Inſtructions which this Diſcourſe contains, the following Words require our particular Attention: *If any Man will do his Will, He ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of*

my ſelf. Let us gather from thence this important Leſſon, that the principal Diſpoſition we ought to be in, to know the Doctrine of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and to diſcover the Truth and Beauty thereof, is to have an upright Heart, and a ſincere Deſire to do the Will of God, as far as it is, and can be known to us.

CHAP. VII. 34,——53.

THE *Phariſees* being enrag'd becauſe the People were affected at the Diſcourſes and Miracles of our Lord, ſent ſome Perſons to ſeize upon Him; but He continued to ſpeak with ſo much Authority and Plainneſs, and exhorted the People ſo pathetically, that ſeveral acknowledged Him to be a Prophet, and that ſome even believed He was the Meſſiah; ſo that thoſe who were order'd to lay hold of Him, returned without daring to do it; at which the *Phariſees* were extreamly irritated.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt Thing we have here to obſerve is, that the Speeches and Wonders which Chriſt wrought, produced very different Effects, foraſmuch as the People were extreamly affected thereat, and filled with Admiration; whereas, on the contrary, the *Phariſees* were ſo provoked by them, that they would have cauſed our Lord to be apprehended. Thus we may ſee how differently the Word of God is received, ſome open their Eyes and their Hearts to the Truth, and grow better by it; others reject it, and proceed even to hate thoſe who propoſe it, and to be exaſperated againſt them. II. We may take notice in the Diſcourſe of our Saviour, the Evidence, Meekneſs, and

and Authority with which He continues to apply himſelf to the *Jews*; and eſpecially thoſe Invitations, ſo full of Goodneſs, which He makes them, in ſaying, *If any one Thirſt, let him come unto me and drink.* Whereby He offers them his Grace, and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which He was ready to pour upon them that ſhould believe in Him. He likewiſe makes us the ſame Offers in the Goſpel. 'Tis our buſineſs to receive them as we ought, and to embrace them with Zeal and Gratitude. III. We ought to reflect upon what St. *John* ſays, that thoſe who were commanded to ſeize our Saviour, durſt not do it, but told them who ſent them, that *never Man ſpake like this Man.* By which we ſee, on one Hand, the Virtue and Efficacy of the Word of God; and on the other, that God renders the Deſigns of the Wicked vain and uſeleſs whenever He pleaſes. Finally, It is a remarkable thing, that the *Phariſees*, inſtead of Diſcovering, that in Oppoſing Chriſt they oppoſed God himſelf; and inſtead of being moved at ſeeing ſo many People bearing witneſs to our Lord, were more and more enrag'd againſt Him, and even againſt the People who ſpoke favourably of Him and his Doctrine. This is a Proof, that the moſt Knowing and moſt Conſiderable People, are often leſs diſpoſed than the Mean and the Simple, to receive the Goſpel; becauſe they are poſſeſs'd by their Paſſions, and eſpecially becauſe they are filled with Pride, and a good Opinion of themſelves, and that they don't endeavour ſincerely, and in the Integrity of their Hearts, to be inſtructed, and to know the Truth.

CHAP. VIII. 1——29.

ST. *John* relates here, I. The Hiſtory of the Woman taken in Adultery. II. A Diſcourſe that Chriſt had with the *Jews*, in which He told them He was the Light of the World, and that they ought to believe what He told them of himſelf. III. He reproaches them of their Blindneſs and Unbelief, and ſpeaks about his Departure from this World, and his Death; but does it in figurative Terms, and ſuch as they could not comprehend.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TO underſtand the Hiſtory of the Adulterous Woman, and to make a right Uſe of it, we muſt obſerve, I. That the Deſign of the *Phariſees* in bringing this Woman to Chriſt, was to enſnare Him; for if He had ſaid that ſhe ought not to be put to Death, they would have charged Him with breaking the Law of God; and if He had paſſed Sentence of Condemnation on her, they would have accuſed Him to the Governour for violating the Rites of the ſupream Magiſtrate. II. If Chriſt did not condemn that Woman, it was not becauſe her Crime was not great, and worthy of Death, but the Reaſon why He acted in that manner was, that it did not belong to Him to exerciſe the Office of a Magiſtrate or a Judge, and to ſhew, that He ſought nothing but the Salvation of Sinners. III. It is particularly to be obſerved, that our Lord ſaid to that Woman: *Go thy ways, and ſin no more*; which ſhews, that He was far from excuſing her Crime; and which may alſo teach us, that God does not pardon Sinners but upon condition that they will not relapſe into their

their Sins. In our Saviour's Diſcourſe with the *Jews*, we may conſider, I. Theſe remarkable Expreſſions of our Lord: *I am the Light of the World; he that followeth me, ſhall not walk in Darkneſs, but ſhall have the Light of Life.* Theſe Words ought to be continually meditated by us Chriſtians, and we ought to be excited by them always to follow Chriſt, to imitate Him, and to walk in the Way which He has chalked out for us by his Doctrine, and by his Example, and which will certainly lead us to Life and Immortality. II. What Chriſt ſaid to the *Jews* with ſo much Clearneſs, and ſo much Meekneſs, to extricate them from thoſe Prejudices they labour'd under in Oppoſition to Him, and to engage them to believe that He ſpake to them as from God, ſhould yet more ſtrongly convince us, that He is the Son of God, and that his Doctrine proceeds from Heaven; God having given authentick Teſtimonies thereof, not only by the Miracles which our Saviour wrought, but likewiſe by what followed his Death, his Reſurrection, and his Exaltation to heavenly Glory. *Laſtly*, We have ſeen that the *Jews* did not improve the Inſtructions of our Lord, that they continued ſtill in their Unbelief, and that Chriſt therefore told them that they ſhould die in their Sins. Thus Men, who are enſlaved to the World, and to their Paſſions, reſiſt the Evidence and Force of Truth when it is propoſed to them; and by refuſing to believe in *Jeſus*, and to obey Him, they remain in their Sins, and conſequently in Condemnation and in Death.

CHAP. VIII. 30,——59.

I. CHRIST exhorts thoſe among the *Jews*, who had believed in Him, to perſevere in his Doctrine, and promiſes them true Liberty. II. He tells the unbelieving *Jews* they were not the Children of *Abraham*, ſince they did not imitate Him in his Faith, and reproaches them of their Unbelief, wherewith they were ſo provoked, as to ſay very harſh Things to Him, and to attempt to ſtone Him; but He eſcaped their Rage, and retreated from them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

LET us learn from hence, I. That when we have the Happineſs of knowing Chriſt, and of believing in Him, we ought conſtantly to perſevere in the Truth, and adhere to it more and more; which if we do, we ſhall be really his Diſciples, and enjoy that true Liberty of the Children of God, which conſiſts, as our Lord has ſaid, in being deliver'd from the Bondage of Sin: II. What He told the *Jews*, that they were not the Children of God, nor of *Abraham*, ſince they did not imitate the Faith of that Patriarch, but that they were rather the Children of the Devil, ſince they did his Works, has great Weight in it. We may learn from thence, that the ſureſt Token whereby to diſcover the Children of God is, that they do his Will, and that they love thoſe whom God loves; but thoſe that ſet themſelves againſt the Truth, and againſt ſuch as declare it, are the Children and Imitators of the Devil, who is a Liar, Murderer, and Enemy of the Truth. We likewiſe ſee in this Diſcourſe of our Lord, how happy thoſe are who receive his Doctrine,

and

and ſubmit thereto, ſince He declares that they are not under the Power of Death. III. We may obſerve next, that tho' Chriſt ſpoke to the *Jews* with ſo much plainneſs and ſtrength, they, inſtead of benefitting by his Inſtructions, were exaſperated thereat, and proceded to ſuch a degree of Rage, as to call Him a *Samaritan*, and a Man poſſeſs'd by the Devil. This is an Inſtance of the moſt deplorable Blindneſs, and the blackeſt Malice, and ſhews us how dangerous it is to abandon our ſelves to our Paſſions, and to fall into Unbelief. *Laſtly*, We have in this Chapter, a remarkable Proof of the Glory and Divinity of Chriſt, by his declaring that he was before *Abraham*, which ought to convince us ſo much the more of the Divinity of the Goſpel, and our Obligation to obey Chriſt, as He who is our God and our Saviour, to whom Honour, Glory, and Obedience, ought to be render'd by all Men for ever.

CHAP. IX.

THIS Chapter contains the Hiſtory of the Cure of a Man that was born Blind.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Hiſtory we have now read is very remarkable; beſides the Proofs of the Goodneſs and Power of Chriſt, which appear by his healing the Man that was born Blind, as well as in all the other Miracles of our Lord, we ſee here three Things well worthy our Attention. I. The Steps which the *Phariſees* made, and the Pains they took to deny this Miracle: What they ſaid for that purpoſe to the Father and Mother of the blind Man, and afterwards to the blind Man himſelf, the Slanders they raiſed againſt *Jeſus Chriſt*; And, *Laſtly*, when they could oppoſe nothing againſt the Certainty

of the Miracle, and being unable to anſwer the Arguments of the Man, they broke out into injurious Language againſt him, and excommunicated him. In all this their Procedure we may diſcover Marks of the moſt violent Paſſion, and of the moſt obſtinate Malice. The Wicked reſiſt every thing, they ſhut their Eyes, and are more and more hardened, even by thoſe Things which ſhould affect and convert them. II. We may obſerve in the Diſcourſe of the blind Man, the Sincerity and Strength with which he ſpoke to the *Phariſees*, and confounded them, by maintaining that he had been well cured; and ſince Chriſt had reſtored his Sight to him, He could not be a wicked Man and a Deceiver, as they pretended. In Reading this Relation, we ſee the Power of Truth, and that the moſt ſimple Perſons do often judge better of Things, than thoſe who are thought to have more Senſe and Knowledge, and that God makes uſe of ſuch mean and ignorant People, to confound the wiſe Men of this World. III. We ſee that Chriſt, knowing how this Man had been excommunicated by the *Phariſees*, for ſpeaking the Truth in their Preſence, revealed himſelf to him, telling him that He was the Son of God, and aſſuring him that thoſe who paſſed for the moſt Learned, ſuch as the *Phariſees*, ſhould continue in their Blindneſs, whilſt ſuch as were look'd upon as ignorant, but who were humble and ſincere, ſhould benefit by his Doctrine. Our Lord, as we ſee, receives with Goodneſs thoſe that love the Truth, and that are perſecuted by the World, and He grants them new Gifts, and new Graces, whilſt thoſe who are conceited of themſelves, and obſtinately reject the Truth when it is offer'd to them, remain in their Unbelief, and periſh in their Darkneſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. X. 1,——21.

THIS is a Diſcourſe which our Lord held with the *Jews*, after He had cured the Man that was born Blind, in which He compares himſelf to a good Shepherd. He ſpeaks likewiſe of falſe Shepherds, and of Hirelings, by which Characters He deſcribes Deceivers and falſe Teachers. He ſays, that ſuch People had nothing elſe in View but their own Intereſt, and only ſought to gratifie their own Pride and Covetouſneſs; whereas He came not into the World but for the Welfare and Health of his Sheep, and that He was willing even to lay down his Life for them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Diſcourſe of Chriſt is much plainer to us than it was to the *Jews*, ſince we know perfectly that our Lord is the true Shepherd, who gave his Life for the Sheep, that is to ſay, for all ſuch as ſhould believe in Him; and that He came to gather them all together in his Church. Upon which we muſt acknowledge, I. This infinite Love of Chriſt, our good Shepherd, who ſo tenderly loved his Sheep, and who ſuffer'd Death, to obtain Life and Salvation for them. II. How great our Happineſs is, to be of the Number of thoſe Sheep which He has redeemed by his Blood, and brought into his Fold, and for which He has purchaſed everlaſting Life. And, finally, what Cauſe we have to love this charitable Shepherd, who has thus loved us, to hear his Voice, and to live under his Government in the Obedience we owe Him, and in a ſteady Expectation of the Glory and Happineſs He has

has promiſed us, and which He reſerves for us in his Kingdom.

CHAP. X. 22,——42.

THIS is the Sum of what we are about to read: I. Chriſt being at *Jeruſalem*, at the Feaſt of the Dedication of the Temple, and the *Jews* enquiring of Him, whether He were the Meſſiah, He tells them, that his Miracles ſhewed ſufficiently what He was; that if they did not know Him, it proceded from their Hardneſs; but that his own Sheep knew Him; that He would give everlaſting Life to all them that ſhould believe in Him; and that God would never ſuffer them to periſh, ſince that He and God his Father were one. II. The *Jews* thereupon were going to ſtone Him, becauſe He took upon Him the Title of the Son of God; but our Lord not being willing to ſpeak openly to them concerning his Divinity, contented Himſelf with telling them, that ſince the Scripture calls Princes and Magiſtrates Gods, He might very well aſſume the Name of the Son of God without Blaſphemy, for as much as God had ſent Him into the World, and that his Miracles plainly proved that He was ſo. After which our Saviour retreated to *Jeruſalem*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may here make four Obſervations: I. The firſt relates to the ſtrange Blindneſs and Malice of the *Jews*, who, after ſo many Miracles which Chriſt had wrought, and ſo many Proofs that ſhewed He was ſent from God, asked him whether He was the Meſſiah, and then would have ſtoned Him for a Blaſ-

Blaſphemer. Our Lord himſelf obſerves, that this Unbelief of the *Jews* proceeded from their not loving the Truth, and from their want of a ſincere Deſire to know it. If therefore Men do not profit by the Doctrine of *Chriſt Jeſus*, and that in the midſt of Light they be ſtill in Ignorance and Error, it proceeds from the want of Docility, and love for Truth and for Virtue. II. The ſecond Obſervation is, that the Token and Character of our Saviour's Sheep, that is to ſay, of his true Diſciples, is to hearken to the Voice of their divine Shepherd, to follow Him, and to obey Him. III. We ſee in this Diſcourſe of our Lord, that the Happineſs and Salvation of true Believers is certain, ſince He declares, *that He knows them, that He gives unto them Eternal Life, that they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of his Hand.* Theſe Words ſhould fill all thoſe that love the Lord *Jeſus* with great Comfort and ſtrong Confidence, and confirm them more and more in ſuch Love. IV. Since our Lord ſays in this Chapter, that He could juſtly take upon himſelf the Title of God, we ought ſeriouſly to reflect on the infinite Dignity of his Perſon, and the Excellence of his Office, and be thereby excited to render Him the Honour, Adoration, and Obedience that are due to Him, as being our God and our Saviour bleſſed for evermore.

CHAP. XI.

THIS Chapter contains the Hiſtory of the Reſurrection of *Lazarus*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt Conſideration to be made upon this Hiſtory, which is one of the moſt remarkable of the whole Goſpel is, that though our Lord had a great Kindneſs for *Lazarus*, yet He did not go *Bethany* till after he was dead, to the end that the Miracle He ſhould work, by reſtoring him to Life, might be much more Illuſtrious than that of curing his Diſtemper. Thoſe whom God loves, may be expoſed to divers Evils; He even delays to come to their Aſſiſtance, but He uſes them thus, to the end that his Power and Love may appear more plainly in their Deliverance. II. We may obſerve in what the Siſters of *Lazarus* ſaid to our Saviour, their Piety, Love, and adherence to Chriſt, and the great Opinion they had of his Power. Eſpecially we may ſee thereby, that they were fully perſuaded their Brother would riſe at the laſt Day. We have yet much greater Reaſon than thoſe two holy Women to love our Lord, to put our whole Truſt in Him, to expect all Things from his Power, and particularly, to believe that the Dead muſt riſe again. III. The Goodneſs with which Chriſt ſpake to the Siſters of *Lazarus*, to comfort them, and to prepare them for the Miracle which He deſign'd to do; the Concern He ſhewed, and the Tears He ſhed when He ſaw *Lazarus* in the Tomb, are very plain Proofs, how much He loved theſe two Women and their Brother, and how charitable He was, and full of Compaſſion. This is an Example which ought to engage us to be affected with the Misfortunes of other Men, and to comfort the Miſerable with all our Might. But what is chiefly to be obſerved here is, that our Lord reſtored Life to *Lazarus*, after

ter he had been four Days in the Grave. This great Miracle, which Chriſt wrought but few Days before his Death, and in the Preſence of a great Number of the *Jews*, ſeveral of whom believed in Him, is one of the moſt illuſtrious Proofs that He gave, during his whole Life, that He was the Son of God. This Miracle ſerves eſpecially to confirm the Doctrine of the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the Truth of what our Lord ſays in this Chapter: *I am the Reſurrection and the Life: He that believeth in me, though he were Dead, yet ſhall he live.* IV. St. *John* acquaints us, that the *Phariſees*, inſtead of being convinced by ſo illuſtrious a Miracle, were ſo enraged to ſee the People declare for Chriſt, that they form'd a Deſign of putting Him to Death, which made Him retire to a ſolitary Place till the Feaſt of the Paſſover. By this we may ſtill ſee, that ſuch as abandon themſelves to their Paſſions, are provoked by that which ought to ſoften and prevail upon them, and that they always grow worſe and worſe. But it ought likewiſe to be conſider'd, that God permitted the *Jews* to take this Reſolution, to the end that, contrary to their Deſign, our Lord might ſuffer Death, not only for the *Jewiſh* Nation, but alſo to collect into one Body all the Children of God.

CHAP. XII. 1,——19.

THIS Part of the Twelfth Chapter contains three Things. I. *Mary* waſhes our Saviour's Feet. II. Several People come from *Bethany*, to ſee Chriſt, and *Lazarus* that was raiſed. III. Our Lord makes his Royal Entry into *Jeruſalem*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have heard, I. How *Mary* anointed the Feet of Chriſt; what Judgment *Judas* paſſed upon this Action, and what was ſaid by our Lord in Defence of it. As *Mary* anointed Him, to teſtifie her Reſpect and Love for Him, we ought likewiſe to ſhew Him our Love and our Zeal, by all the Means that are in our Power. The Murmuring of *Judas*, who, being a Thief, and a covetous Man, complain'd that the Value of that Ointment was not given to the Poor, proves very clearly, that the Heart of this falſe Diſciple was entirely corrupted. We likewiſe ſee by this Inſtance, what Power Covetouſneſs has over thoſe whom it poſſeſſes, and how wicked Men do ſometimes hide their Paſſions under the Veil of Religion and Piety. And what Chriſt ſaid on the behalf of *Mary* ſhews, that He vouchſafes to accept whatever is done for his Honour, and particularly all Acts of Charity. II. The Arrival of thoſe Perſons that came to *Bethany*, to ſee *Lazarus*, whom our Lord had raiſed, and the Reſolution taken by the Prieſts to put *Lazarus* to Death as well as Chriſt, is an argument of the Truth of this Miracle. It likewiſe ſhews, that the Wickedneſs of the chief among the *Jews* were at the higheſt Pitch, and that there was no more good to be hoped of them. III. The Royal Entry of Chriſt into *Jeruſalem*, tended to teach the *Jews*, that He was the Meſſiah promiſed by the Prophets, but that He was a ſpiritual and heavenly King, and at the ſame time full of Meekneſs and Goodneſs. And the Acclamations of the People, who attended Him on this Occaſion, praiſing God, and particularly, bearing Witneſs that Chriſt had called

Lazarus

Lazarus from the Grave, and reſtored him to Life, ought to incite us to praiſe and adore this great Redeemer, at the Sight of ſo many wonderful Things He has done, and ſo many Tokens He has given us of his Glory and his Love, and to ſay, *Bleſſed is the King of Iſrael, that cometh in the Name of the Lord.*

CHAP. XII. 20,—50.

ST. *John* relates four Things here: I. What Chriſt ſaid when certain Strangers, that were come to *Jeruſalem*, on account of the Feaſt of the Paſſover, deſired to ſee Him. II. That God cauſed a Voice at that time to be heard from Heaven, and that upon the ſame Occaſion our Lord diſcours'd concerning his Death, and the Eſtabliſhment of his Kingdom, but that the *Jews* did not underſtand his Words. III. St. *John* obſerves, that though our Lord had wrought ſo many Miracles, the *Jews* did not believe in Him, and that this their Unbelief had been foretold by the Prophet *Iſaiah*. IV. And, *Laſtly*, the Evangeliſt relates ſome Exhortations which Chriſt made to the *Jews* before his Death, in which He ſhews, what would happen to thoſe that ſhould receive his Doctrine, and to thoſe that ſhould reject it.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Meaning of what our Saviour ſaid, when the Strangers deſired to ſee Him, was, that He would quickly manifeſt Himſelf to all Men; but that He was to die firſt; and that even all thoſe who had a mind to follow Him, ought to prepare themſelves for Sufferings and Death; but that He would exalt thoſe that ſhould believe in Him, and ſerve

Him, to the ſame Glory to which He was about to be exalted. The *Jews* did not well comprehend this Diſcourſe; but it is by no means obſcure to us. II. We have ſeen how God anſwer'd *Jeſus Chriſt* at that time by a Voice which was heard from Heaven. This Prodigy was to convince the *Jews*, that Chriſt was ſent from God; whereupon our Lord declared, that the Kingdom of Satan was going to be deſtroy'd, that He ſhould ſoon draw all Men to Him, and that this would be one of the Fruits of his Death. The Event has fully verified this Prediction of Chriſt, which proves inconteſtably the Divinity of his Doctrine. III. We have ſeen the Reflexions which St. *John* makes in this Chapter upon the Unbelief of the *Jews*, ſome of whom did not believe in Chriſt, and others durſt not own that they took Him for the Meſſiah, becauſe they were afraid of the *Phariſees*, and becauſe they loved the Praiſe of Men more than that of God. 'Tis thus when the Goſpel is preached to Men, that ſome harden themſelves, and reject it, and that others, who are in ſome manner affected with its Excellency, dare not make an open Profeſſion of Truth and Holineſs, being with-holden by Fear, by an unſeaſonable Shame, or by other Paſſions. IV. We ought carefully to attend to what Chriſt ſaid to the *Jews* towards the end of his Life, and at the Time when they were about to be deprived of his Preſence, namely, that He was come to enlighten them, and to lead them to Life; that they ſhould walk in the Light, before the Darkneſs overtook them; and that thoſe who would not hear his Word, ſhould be judged by that ſame Word which they rejected. Let us make a better Uſe than the *Jews* did, of this divine Light, which enlightens us

us, leſt the Darkneſs overtakes us too, and leſt the Goſpel, which is preached to us, become one Day the Cauſe of our Condemnation.

CHAP. XIII. 1,——17.

CHRIST waſhes his Apoſtles Feet, and exhorts them to Humility and Charity.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHEN the Son of God waſhed the Feet of his Apoſtles, a little before his Death, the Deſign of that Action, ſo extraordinary, and ſo ſurprizing, was to ſhew how much He loved them, to give them an example of Humility, and to teach them, that they ought to love reciprocally, to conſider all Men as their Equals, and to baniſh from their Minds all Thoughts of a temporal Kingdom and worldly Glory. We ought ſeriouſly to meditate upon this Inſtance of Humility and Charity, which is of ſo great an Efficacy to render us truly Humble, and to incite us to love one another ſincerely. Let us for this purpoſe remember what our Saviour ſays himſelf, that if He who is the Maſter and Lord has ſo greatly loved us, and has ſo much humbled himſelf, much more ought we to entertain the ſame Sentiments one for another. This is the Uſe we ought to make of what has been read, as our Lord exhorts us by theſe Words: *I have given you an Example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to you.*

CHAP. XIII. 18,——38.

I. OUR Lord declares that *Judas* would deliver Him to the *Jews*. II. He diſcourſes with his Diſciples about his Deceaſe, and exhorts them to love one another. III. He foretels that *Peter* would deny Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may conſider here, I. That our Lord thought fit to declare, in the Preſence of his Apoſtles, that one of them would deliver Him to the *Jews*, to the end, that when *Judas* ſhould betray Him, they might be convinced that it was to happen ſo, for the Accompliſhment of the Deſigns of Providence. Howbeit, Chriſt did not name *Judas*, nor diſcover him to all the Apoſtles, becauſe they ſhould not attempt to hinder his Intentions. From thence it appears plainly, that our Saviour was not ignorant of any thing that was to befal Him, that He knew the Purpoſes of Men, and the moſt ſecret Thoughts of their Hearts, and conſequently, that He entirely knows all ſuch as love Him, and believe ſincerely in Him, as alſo all falſe Chriſtians and Hypocrites. What He ſaid to *Judas* ſhews likewiſe that God warns Sinners, but when they are harden'd, and will not amend by his Warnings, He leaves them to themſelves. II. It is next to be obſerved, that Chriſt being about to leave his Diſciples, recommended to them above all Things to love one another, which is the great Commandment that our bleſſed Redeemer has left, and of which He has given us an Example, by dying for us, and has moſt expreſly declared, that this ſhould be the Token by which his true Diſciples would be

be diſtinguiſhed. Our principal Duty therefore is, heartily to love each other, and to live in Peace and Concord, without which it does not belong to us to bear the glorious Name of Chriſtians. III. The Prediction Chriſt made, that *Peter* would deny Him, is a freſh Proof, that nothing is hid to our Lord, and that He knows us better than we know our ſelves; and when we ſhall have obſerved, that this Apoſtle anſwer'd Chriſt with ſo much Aſſurance, and nevertheleſs a very ſhort Time after, fell into that Sin, of which He thought himſelf uncapable, it ſhould teach us to diſtruſt our ſelves, to be upon the Guard againſt our own Weakneſs, and to improve the Warnings which our Lord gives us, and the Means He offers us, not to be overcome by Temptations.

CHAP. XIV.

THIS Chapter, and the two following, contain the Diſcourſe that Chriſt had with his Diſciples the Evening before his Death. His Deſign in this Diſcourſe, was to comfort them, to ſtrengthen their Faith, and to fill them with Courage and Zeal, to the end, they might not be offended at his Death; and that afterwards they might be in a Condition to preach the Goſpel, without fearing the Hatred of the World.

In this Fourteenth Chapter, I. Chriſt makes mention to the Apoſtles of the Glory to which He was about to be exalted, and to which He would exalt them one Day. II. He tells them, that they ought to be convinced by his Miracles that God had ſent Him, and that they themſelves ſhould do as great Miracles as his, and He exhorts them to keep his Commandments. III. He promiſes to ſend them the Holy Ghoſt,

aſſures them they ſhould ſee Him quickly again, and talks to them of the Happineſs of thoſe that ſhall perſevere in his Love, and obſerve his Word. IV. He gives them his Bleſſing, and his Peace, and exhorts them to rejoice at his Departure. This Diſcourſe being finiſhed, He leaves *Jeruſalem*, and goes with his Apoſtles towards the Mount of *Olives*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may conſider in general upon this Chapter, the great Love Chriſt had for his Diſciples, and which he bears to all thoſe that love Him, and believe in Him. Theſe are the Duties to which this Diſcourſe of our Lord engages us: I. To Meditate continually upon the Glory where He has been exalted in the Heavens, and whereto He declares that He will likewiſe receive us; to aſpire to the ſame Glory, by following the Way that leads to it; and ſince He himſelf is that Way, to adhere inviolably to Him. II. The ſecond Duty is, ardently to love our Saviour, and to ſhew the Sincerity of our Love by keeping his Commandments. III. The third is, to implore by our Prayers the Aſſiſtance and Conduct of the Holy Ghoſt; remembering what Chriſt ſaid, that the World cannot know nor receive that Holy Spirit, and that therefore, if we deſired to obtain it, we muſt purifie our Hearts from the Love of the World. IV. We ſhould conſider, that as our Lord promiſed his Diſciples to return to them after his Reſurrection, ſo He will come to us at the laſt Day, that then his Elect ſhall be filled with Comfort and Joy, and that, in Expectation of this glorious Coming, our chief Care ought to be, to perſevere in his Love, and to obey his Commandments. The laſt

Part

Part of this Chapter teaches us, that Chriſt communicates and unites Himſelf in the moſt intimate and wholeſome Manner to all thoſe that love Him, and keep his Word; that He heaps his Favours upon them, and grants them his Bleſſing and his Peace. A due Reflexion upon all theſe precious Advantages ought to inflame us with Love for this charitable Redeemer, and convince us, that all our Happineſs conſiſts in being Faithful to Him, in Loving Him, and living in his Communion.

CHAP. XV.

OUR Lord does four things in this Chapter. I. He repreſents, by the Compariſon of the Vine and the Branches, the Union between Him and his Diſciples. II. He exhorts them to perſevere in the ſame Union, and in his Love, to keep his Commandments, and particularly to love one another. III. He tells them, He had choſen them to preach the Goſpel throughout all the Earth, with wonderful Succeſs. IV. He warns them that they ſhould be expoſed to Perſecution and the hatred of the World; but for their Encouragement, He repreſents to them, that He had born the ſame Hatred, and promiſes them the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, which He would ſend after He left them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE following Reflections may be made upon the four Parts of this Chapter. I. The Firſt, which contains the Vine and the Branches, denotes how ſtrict is the Union which the Faithful have with Jeſus Chriſt, that all our Happineſs depends upon this Union, that we muſt partake of the Spirit and Life

of Chriſt, to bring forth thoſe Fruits that tend to the Glory of God, and are anſwerable to the advantage of being his Diſciples; and that ſuch as are not united to Him by Faith, and that bear no Fruit, ſhall be cut off and caſt into the Fire like withered Branches. II. The Second Part teaches us, that our great and principal Duty is, to remain in the love of our Saviour, to keep his Commandments, and to love each other, continually ſetting before our ſelves, for this Purpoſe, the Example of his great Love to us, which has engaged Him to lay down his Life for us. III. What Chriſt ſays to his Apoſtles, that He had choſen them to eſtabliſh his Kingdom throughout all the World, is a very clear proof of the Divinity of the Goſpel, ſince the Preaching of the Apoſtles has been attended with the Converſion of ſo many Nations; but we ought likewiſe to conſider, that our Lord has choſen and called us all, to the end that we may bear the Fruits of Holineſs, and that each of us may labour with all our Might to promote his Knowledge and his Kingdom. IV. The laſt Part of this Chapter inſtructs us in two Things: The one is, that the World uſually hates thoſe that love Chriſt, and that lead a godly Life; but we muſt not think that ſtrange, ſince our Lord Himſelf has likewiſe been expoſed to the ſame hatred of the World. The other, that after that Chriſt has ſpoken, and the Goſpel been preached to Men, thoſe who continue in Infidelity and in Corruption are without excuſe, ſince they reject the Teſtimony of the Son of God, of the holy Spirit, and of the Apoſtles, and wilfully ſhut their Eyes againſt the Truth.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

I. CHRIST continues to warn the Apoſtles, that they ought to prepare themſelves to be perſecuted, and even to ſuffer Death. II. To comfort them for the Sorrow which his Departure occaſioned them, he promiſes them the Holy Ghoſt, and tells them that that holy Spirit would condemn the unbelieving World, and enable them more perfectly to know the Truths which Chriſt had taught them, and to declare them to Mankind. III. He adds, that He was about to leave them for a little Time, but that they would ſoon ſee Him again, when He ſhould riſe from the Dead; that then they would be filled with Joy; that He would beſtow on them new favours, and make 'em to obtain of God the moſt precious Gifts. IV. We ſee at the end of this Chapter, that this Diſcourſe of Chriſt ſerved to comfort the Apoſtles, and to ſtrengthen their Faith.

Reflexions after the Reading.

LET us learn from hence; I. That as the Apoſtles were to be expoſed to great Perſecutions, ſo likewiſe true Believers muſt expect to feel the effects of the hatred of thoſe who know not or love not the Lord Jeſus. II. That it was neceſſary for our Happineſs that Chriſt ſhould leave the World, to the end that He might enter into his Glory, and ſend us the Holy Ghoſt. III. What Chriſt ſays of that Spirit, that *when He is come, He will reprove the World of Sin, and of Righteouſneſs, and of Judgment*, ſignifies, that the coming of the Holy Ghoſt and the Preaching of the Apoſtles would ſerve to convict the Jews of a wilful and inexcuſable

cuſable Unbelief, to prove that Jeſus was the Son of God, and to deſtroy the Kingdom of the Devil. This is what has actually happened, and whereby we plainly ſee, that the Doctrine of our Lord proceeds from God. IV. The excellent Promiſes which Chriſt made the Apoſtles, of filling them abundantly with the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, have likewiſe been accompliſhed, and the Effects thereof have appeared, by the wonderful Fruits of their Preaching. V. We may obſerve, that the Apoſtles did not underſtand what our Saviour meant, when He told them, that in a little while they ſhould not ſee Him, and again, in a little while they ſhould ſee Him, and that He was going to his Father, and that then they ſhould be entirely comforted, and that theſe Words were perfectly explained by his Reſurrection, by his Aſcenſion, and by the glorious Conſequences thereof. Theſe Promiſes, which confirm the Faith of the Apoſtles, ought alſo to ſtrengthen ours, and induce us to believe, that although Jeſus Chriſt be at preſent Abſent from us, He will not be ſo always; that if we perſevere in his Love, He will make us obtain from God the moſt wholſome Favours; and that as He returned to his Apoſtles after his Reſurrection, He will likewiſe return to us at his ſecond and laſt Coming, to bring us into the Glory of his Kingdom. Let us beſeech Him to ſhew us all this Mercy. *Amen.*

CHAP. XVII.

THIS contains the Prayer which Chriſt offer'd to God his Father before He ſuffer'd Death, and it conſiſts of three Articles: I. He prays for Himſelf, and deſires to be received into heavenly Glory, to the end that God himſelf may be Glorifyed thereby. II. He prays for

for the Apoſtles, whom He was about to leave, and begs of his Father to Protect them and to Sanctify them, to the end that they may perſevere in the Faith, and be enabled to preach the Goſpel throughout the World, without fearing Perſecutions. III. He prays for all thoſe that ſhould believe in Him, and that ſhould receive the preaching of the Apoſtles; and He deſires of God, that as well the Apoſtles as all the Faithful may be always united to Him, and among one another, by Faith and by Charity, and that they might alſo be admitted to that Glory, into which He was about to enter, and to remain for ever with Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this excellent Prayer which our Lord made, when He was juſt going to offer Himſelf as a Sacrifice upon the Croſs, we may obſerve, I. His great Zeal for the Glory of God, and the glorious Reward He expected after his Sufferings. By this Example of our Saviour, we ought to be animated with the ſame Zeal, and to glorifie God upon Earth as much as we are capable of doing it; to the End that we may be admitted into that Glory which He has prepared for his Elect, before the Foundation of the World. II. We ſee in this Prayer the great Love that Chriſt bore to his Diſciples, and with how much Warmth and Tenderneſs He recommended them to the Protection of God his Father before He left them. The Event made appear that the Prayers of our Lord were heard, ſince, excepting *Judas*, whoſe Infidelity He had foretold, all the Apoſtles perſevered in the Truth which they had embraced, and that the Zeal they exerted had ſo wonderful a Succeſs in the Converſion of them. III. But what

what we ought above all to obſerve here, and what chiefly concerns us is, that our Lord did not only Pray for the Apoſtles, but for all ſuch as ſhould believe in Him, and that ſhould receive their Preaching. We may ſee thereby how dear the Faithful are to Chriſt, the care He takes of them, and the deſire He has to render them Partakers of that Glory which He now enjoys; This ought to fill all thoſe who truly Love the Lord Jeſus with Joy and Confidence. But it muſt be carefully obſerved, that Chriſt only Prays thus for the truly Faithful, and that He Himſelf declares, that he does not Pray for worldly People, and for Unbelievers. If therefore we deſire to be of the number of thoſe for whom Chriſt makes this Prayer, and for whom he interceeds in Heaven, we muſt ſeparate our ſelves from the World, we muſt be joyned to Chriſt by a true Faith, and to our Neighbours by a ſincere Love, and to perſevere in the Communion of God our Father, and of Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, to the end of our Lives. The Lord grant us this Grace!

CHAP. XVIII.

I. CHRIST is taken in the Garden. II. He is afterwards carried before the Council of the Jews. III. And next before *Pilate*, who refuſed at firſt to Condemn him. IV. We find here likewiſe St. *Peter*'s Denial.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Chapter there are four Principal things to be conſidered. I. That when our Lord was delivered to the Jews by *Judas*, He cauſed thoſe that came to apprehend Him to fall down to the Earth by one Word only. This was to make

make his Enemies ſenſible of his Power, to hinder them from doing any Hurt to his Apoſtles, and to ſhew them that He could, if He had intended it, eſcape Death. II. The Second thing relates to the Behaviour of St. *Peter*, who drew his Sword in the Defence of his Maſter, and a little while after denied Him. This is a remarkable Inſtance of inconſiderate Zeal, and at the ſame time, of a great Weakneſs. It likewiſe furniſhes us with two Inſtructions; one is, that if Chriſt blamed what this Apoſtle did, upon an Occaſion that ſeemed lawful, it being to reſiſt thoſe that would unjuſtly have taken away his Maſter's Life; all Actions of Violence and Revenge are unlawful, and there is nothing that can authorize them. The other is, that thoſe who abound in Zeal and good deſigns are capable of making great falls, when they preſume too much of themſelves, and are not upon the Guard againſt their own Weakneſs, and againſt Temptations, by the help of Watching and Prayer. III. In the manner in which they proceeded againſt our Lord, when He was brought before the Council of the Jews, it plainly appears, that He was innocent, and that the Jews only ſought for a Pretence to condemn Him; but it is to be obſerved, that our Lord ſubmitted to their Judgment though 'twas Unjuſt, and to the Outrages they did Him, exerting on that Occaſion wonderful Patience and Meekneſs. This is a noble Leſſon to us of Patience and Reſignation, and we ought to conform our ſelves to it. IV. It is to be obſerved in the laſt Place, that when Jeſus was ſet before *Pilate*, that Governour would not condemn Him at firſt; and that having asked our Lord, whether He was the King of the Jews, He anſwered, He was ſo, but that his Kingdom was not of this World. Theſe Circumſtances ſerve to ſhew

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the Innocence of Chriſt; and the Confeſſion He made in the Preſence of *Pilate*, teaches us, that we muſt always make a free Confeſſion of our Truth, tho' we were ſure thereby to draw upon our ſelves the Hatred of the World, imitating therein the Example of our Saviour, who, as St. *Paul* takes notice, *before* Pontius Pilate *witneſſed a good Confeſſion*, 1 Tim. vi. 13. though the ſame was to be the Cauſe both of his Condemnation and Death.

CHAP. XIX. 1,——16.

PILATE cauſed our Lord to be Scourged, and makes the Soldiers treat Him with Indignity and Contempt, thinking thereby to pacifie the Prieſts and chief Jews. He declares to them he found Him innocent, and endeavours to ſave his Life; but they continuing to require his Death, he conſents at laſt that He ſhould be Crucified.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN the Hiſtory of the Condemnation of Chriſt, we are to conſider the Behaviour of *Pilate*, that of the Jews, and that of our Lord. I. In the Behaviour of *Pilate*, we ſee the Character of an unjuſt Judge; ſince that Governour believing Chriſt to be Innocent, cauſed Him firſt to be Scourged, and next treated with great Contempt, and at laſt condemned Him to be Crucified, though he had for a while reſiſted the Sollicitations of the Jews. 'Twas thus that *Pilate*, after having already committed one unjuſt Action, by Scourging our Saviour, in order to pacifie the Jews, engaged himſelf in the guilt of a much more crying one, by condemning Him to be put to Death. When Men have

have once begun to do a wicked Deed, they always go farther and farther; one Sin leads them on to another and greater, and after ſome ſhort and faint Reſiſtance they proceed to the higheſt kinds of Crimes. All this ſhews how dangerous it is to act againſt Light, and the Conviction of our Conſcience, to ſhew a Complaiſance for the Wicked in evil Things, and to ſeek for Evaſions and Expedients when we are to do our Duty, and to reſiſt Temptation. II. The Behaviour of the *Jews*, who could not be appeaſed either by the Remonſtrances of *Pilate*, or by what Chriſt had ſuffer'd, and who continued to require that He ſhould be Crucified, ſhews their Rage and Injuſtice, and is a Proof that when Men abandon themſelves to their Paſſions, and when they have once taken their ſide, be it never ſo bad, they will hear nothing more, but engage themſelves deeper and deeper into it, till they arrive at the End of their Deſigns. III. The Behaviour of Chriſt, the great Patience, Moderation, and Meekneſs, with which He ſubmitted to all the cruel and unrighteous Treatment of *Pilate* and the *Jews*, ought to make a ſtrong Impreſſion upon us. This is a Token of his great Love, and an Example that has much Weight in it, to render us patient, meek, moderate, and ſubmiſſive to the Will of God, under all the Evils that may befal us, and even tho' we ſhould ſuffer by an effect of the Malice and Wickedneſs of Men.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX. 17,——42.

ST. *John* gives us here an Account of the Crucifixion, Death, and Burial of our Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Paſſion and Death of our Saviour Chriſt, of which we have heard the Hiſtory, ought to be conſider'd and meditated in three principal Views. I. As a Sacrifice which He offer'd to God for the Expiation of our Sins, for our Deliverance from Death, and for procuring us a Right to everlaſting Life. II. As an Engagement to love this charitable Redeemer, who has ſo loved us, and to renounce Sin, which He came to deſtroy by his Death. III. As an example of Patience and Humiliation, which we ought continually to ſet before our Eyes for a Pattern. Beſides theſe general Conſiderations, we may make the four following particular Reflexions upon the Circumſtances of this Hiſtory. I. That the Writing which was put upon the Croſs in three Languages, made known to all the World the Cauſe of Chriſt's Condemnation, and conſequently of his Innocence. II. That the ſeveral Circumſtances of his Paſſion, and of his Death; ſuch as the Dividing his Garments, his Thirſting, his Bones not being broken, and the Piercing his Side, had been foretold by the Oracles of the Old Teſtament. For which reaſon, the *Jews* ought to have obſerved, by all that then happen'd, that *Jeſus* was the Meſſiah promiſed by the Prophets, and 'tis what we ought to be fully perſuaded of, by the wonderful Agreement between the Predictions of the Old Teſtament, and

and the Accompliſhment thereof under the New, in the Perſon of our Saviour. III. What Chriſt ſaid upon the Croſs, to recommend the bleſſed Virgin to St. *John*, ſhews the Tenderneſs and Care our Lord took of his Mother, and at the ſame time, his Love to that Apoſtle. IV. In the Relation of the Burial of our Saviour, we ſee the Zeal of *Joſeph*, of *Nicodemus*, and ſome other pious Perſons, who, upon this Occaſion, gave publick Tokens of their Adherence to Chriſt. The Circumſtances of this Burial ſerve alſo to prove the Truth of his Death and Reſurrection. *Laſtly*, When we reflect upon the Burial of our Lord, it ſhould teach us not to fear either the Grave or Death, knowing that if we die as He did, we ſhall alſo riſe as He did.

CHAP. XX.

I. CHRIST being riſen from the Dead, diſcloſes Himſelf firſt to *Mary Magdalen*. II. Next, to the Apoſtles in the Abſence of *Thomas*. III. And after that, to *Thomas* himſelf.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE ſee in this Chapter, how Chriſt ſhewed himſelf after his Reſurrection; *Firſt*, to *Mary Magdalen*, and then to all the Apoſtles. It appears from the Account of St. *John*, that the Apoſtles did not at firſt believe the Reſurrection of our Lord, and that they were not fully convinced, till He had given them certain and repeated Proofs thereof. This is what we ſee particularly by the Example of St. *Thomas*, who would not believe that Chriſt was riſen, until He had both ſeen Him and touched his

Hands, his Feet, and his Side; but after that he had thus ſatisfied himſelf of the Truth, which at firſt he refus'd to believe, he worſhipped Him as his Saviour, and as his God. All theſe Apparitions of our Lord ſerve to prove, that He is really riſen from the Dead, and to confirm the Sincerity of that Teſtimony which the Apoſtles bore upon this Occaſion. Thus we can no longer doubt that Chriſt was the Son of God, that He has made a perfect Attonement for our Sins by his Death, and that as He himſelf is riſen, He will alſo raiſe us at the laſt Day. Wherefore this Reſurrection ought to ſtrengthen our Faith; and let us, after the Example of *Mary* and the Apoſtles, who were ſo exceedingly rejoiced to ſee their Maſter riſen, and who ſhewed ſo much Zeal and Love for Him; let us alſo bleſs God, for having given us in the Reſurrection of his Son, ſuch certain Proofs and Aſſurances of our own. This hope ought likewiſe to purifie us, and to ſanctifie us; and we looking upon *Jeſus* as our Lord and God, ſhould continually render the Honour, Love, Obedience, and Praiſes that are due to Him. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXI.

I. JESUS manifeſts himſelf to the Apoſtles near the Sea of *Tiberias*, and gives them Proofs of his Reſurrection. II. He reeſtabliſhes St. *Peter* in his Apoſtleſhip, and foretels what was to happen to that Apoſtle, and to St. *John*; which finiſhes this Goſpel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE have ſeen, that our Lord was pleaſed to aſſure his Apoſtles of his Reſurrection,

ction, not only by ſhewing himſelf to them, but in giving them marks of his Divine Power, and by eating in their Preſence. This ought to convince us more and more of that great Truth upon which all our Comfort depends. II. We have likewiſe ſeen how Chriſt, intending to re-eſtabliſh St. *Peter* in the Office of an Apoſtle, asked him three Times before, whether he loved Him. Our Lord obliged him to make theſe three Declarations, to the end, that this Apoſtle might be render'd more ſenſible of the Sin he had committed, in denying Him three times, and repair the Scandal he had thereby given. This teaches us, that Chriſt pardons none but ſuch as confeſs their Sins, that repair them as well as they are able, and forſake them; and what He chiefly requires of us is, to love Him with all our Heart, ſo as to be able to ſay with St. *Peter*: *Lord, thou knoweſt all Things, thou knoweſt that I love thee.* It may be further obſerved, that when St. *Peter* had made this Declaration, Chriſt re-eſtabliſh'd him to his Apoſtleſhip, by ſaying to him, *Feed my Sheep*; that He even foretold that he ſhould undergo Martyrdom, which ſhewed, that the Fidelity of this Apoſtle ſhould thenceforwards be proof againſt all Temptations. Thus God pardons all them that truly repent; thus He grants them his Grace anew; wherefore thoſe whom God has thus pardoned, ought inviolably to adhere to his Service all the reſt of their Lives. We ſee, *Laſtly*, that our Lord foretels, that St. *John* ſhould *tarry till He came.* That ſignifies, that this Apoſtle ſhould live till he had ſeen the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the Ruine of the *Jews*. 'Twas a Privilege that Chriſt thought fit to grant to this Diſciple whom He loved; and this Promiſe was fulfilled, St. *John* having lived to a great Age, and long after all the o-

ther Apoſtles, and above thirty Years after the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*.

Here we finiſh the Reading of the Goſpels: Let us bleſs God for having enlighten'd us with this heavenly Light; let us read and meditate inceſſantly upon theſe holy Books; and let us make the Things contained therein ſubſervient to our Advancement in Faith and Piety, and to the Glory of God our Father, and of *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord. *Amen.*



The ACTS.

CHAP. I.

HERE begins the Reading of the Acts of the Apoſtles, in which we ſee how the Chriſtian Religion prevailed, and was eſtabliſhed, after the Aſcenſion of our Saviour, firſt at *Jeruſalem*, and afterwards at ſeveral other Places, by the Means of the Apoſtles, and chiefly by the Miniſtry of St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*. This Book contains that period of Time which paſſed between the Aſcenſion of Chriſt, and the firſt Impriſonment of St. *Paul* at *Rome*, making the Space of about Thirty Years.

The firſt Chapter relates two Things. I. The Aſcenſion of our Lord. II. The Choice of St. *Matthias* into the Office of an Apoſtle.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter teaches us, I. That our Lord being riſen, continued during Forty Days upon the Earth, that He might ſo much the more fully convince the Apoſtles of the Truth of his Reſurrection; and to give them the Inſtructions that were neceſſary for them; that at the end of theſe forty Days, He was carried up to Heaven in their Preſence, and that the Angels appeared to them, aſſuring them that *Jeſus* was aſcended into Heaven, and that He would come from thence at the laſt Day. This furniſhes us with the moſt convincing Proofs of the Reſurrection of our Lord, of his Aſcenſion, and of the Certainty of his laſt Coming. Theſe Truths being atteſted by the Evidence of the Apoſtles, by that of the Angels, as well as by the wonderful Effects that followed his Exaltation to the heavenly Glory. This Aſcenſion ought particularly to convince us, that *Jeſus* is the Son of God, that He has a Sovereign Authority over all Things, and that his Kingdom is ſpiritual and heavenly. It ſhould likewiſe engage us continually to raiſe our Thoughts and our Deſires towards that glorious Manſion where our Lord is exalted at the right Hand of his Father, and where He alſo prepares for us an everlaſting Habitation. And ſince we know that He is to return from thence at the End of the World, we ſhould live in a conſtant Practice of Godlineſs, in Expectation of the Coming of our Saviour. II. In the ſecond Part of this Chapter there are two chief Things to be obſerved. One, that religious Aſſemblies are authorized by the Example of the Apoſtles, and the firſt Diſciples of Chriſt, who, after his Aſcenſion to Heaven, did commonly meet

meet together to pray. The other is, that as our Lord had choſen Twelve Apoſtles, one of the firſt Cares of St. *Peter* and his Collegues was, to eſtabliſh an Apoſtle in the Place of *Judas*; that for this purpoſe, they made choice of two Perſons, who had been Witneſſes of the Life and Reſurrection of our Saviour; but that one of thoſe two, namely St. *Matthias*, was appointed by Prayer and Lot, becauſe the Apoſtles were to be choſen immediately by Chriſt himſelf.

CHAP. II.

ST. *Luke* relates four Things in this Chapter. I. How the Apoſtles received the Holy Ghoſt upon the Day of Pentecoſt. II. The Diſcourſe St. *Peter* had with the *Jews* on that Day. III. The Effect of this Diſcourſe, which was the Converſion of three Thouſand Perſons. IV. The Condition in which the Church of *Jeruſalem* was at that time.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE muſt obſerve, I. That Chriſt, by ſending the Holy Ghoſt to the Apoſtles, fulfilled the Promiſes He had made them of ſending a Comforter to them after his Departure, and thereby gave them plain and undoubted Proofs of his Exaltation to Heaven. He beſtowed on them the Gift of ſpeaking all kind of Languages, to ſhew they were to preach the Goſpel to all the Nations of the Earth, and to put them into a Capacity of doing it. This Miracle happened on a ſolemn Day, and in the Preſence of a great Multitude of People, the moſt of whom came to *Jeruſalem* from all Parts of the World, to the end, that the Fame

thereof might ſpread on all ſides, and diſpoſe Men to receive the Preaching of the Apoſtles. II. The End and Deſign of the Diſcourſe which St. *Peter* made that Day, was to teach the *Jews*, that what happened then was foretold by the Prophet *Joel*: That this *Jeſus*, whom they had crucified, was riſen again: That God had exalted Him to Heaven: That it was He who had diffuſed upon his Apoſtles theſe miraculous Gifts: And that the *Jews*, and all Mankind, ought to look upon Him as the Meſſiah, and as their Lord and King. This is alſo the Sum of the Goſpel, and what we ought to believe concerning *Jeſus Chriſt*. III. We are to obſerve the wonderful Efficacy of the Preaching of St. *Peter*, in the Converſion of thoſe three Thouſand *Jews* who then receiv'd Baptiſm; and the ready Obedience they yielded to the Word which was declared to them, ſhould ſerve for an Example, and a Motive to us, to amend our Lives, and obey the Goſpel. IV. All Chriſtians ſhould propoſe to themſelves for a Pattern, what St. *Luke* tells us of the State of the Church of *Jeruſalem*, and particularly of the Piety of thoſe firſt Chriſtians, of the admirable Union there was among them, and of the Innocency of their Lives and Manners. Let us learn from thence, diligently to attend at the Meetings and Exerciſes of Piety, to live in Peace and Concord, to practiſe Works of Charity, and to render our ſelves acceptable to God and Man, by the Purity of our Manners, and by the Holineſs of our Behaviour.

CHAP. III.

THIS Chapter contains, I. The Account of a Miracle done by St. *Peter*, in Healing a Cripple. And, II. a Diſcourſe which this Apoſtle

Apoſtle held with the *Jews*, to convince them that the ſaid Miracle was wrought in the Name of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE reſtoring Health to the Lame Man, ſhews us, that preſently after the Aſcenſion of our Lord, the Apoſtles proved before all the *Jews*, by illuſtrious Miracles, that Chriſt was aſcended to Heaven, that they had received the Holy Ghoſt, and that the *Jews* were filled with Admiration at theſe Miracles, which effectually contributed to the Eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian Religion. II. We may next obſerve in the Diſcourſe of St. *Peter*, the Zeal and Boldneſs with which that Apoſtle reproached the *Jews* for the Crime they had committed in Crucifying the Lord; and how he loudly declared, that this *Jeſus* was the Meſſiah, whoſe Coming all the Prophets had foretold. 'Tis thus we ought always to confeſs the Name of our Lord and Saviour, and bear an authentick Teſtimony to the Truth. We ſee here moreover, that tho' the *Jews* had crucified the Son of God, St. *Peter* exhorts them to Repentance, and promiſes them, that their Sins ſhould be blotted out, provided they would be converted, and not perſevere ſtubbornly in their Unbelief; from whence we may infer, that a Return to the Grace of God, is open to all thoſe who repent and amend. III. And *Laſtly*, we ſee in this Chapter, that Chriſt is that great Prophet of whom *Moſes* made mention, and of whom God ſaid, that we ought to hear whatever He ſhall ſay; and that thoſe who refuſe to hear Him, ſhall be cut off from his People. Theſe Words ſhew us plainly, that the

Deſign

Deſign of God is, that Men ſhould obey *Jeſus Chriſt*, and that thoſe who will not obey Him, are excluded from Salvation. Let us ſeriouſly conſider this matter; and ſince we have the Happineſs to hear the Voice of the Son of God, and that it is likewiſe for our ſakes He was ſent into the World, that He might bleſs us, and turn us away from our Iniquities, let us yield Him the Obedience we owe Him, and receive with Gratitude and Faith this Bleſſing which is offer'd us in *Jeſus Chriſt*; and to the end that we may partake thereof, let every one of us reſolve to forſake his Sins.

CHAP. IV.

WE ſee here, I. The Impriſonment of the Apoſtles, their appearing before the Council of the *Jews*, and what happened thereupon. II. A Prayer which they made to God, after their having been ſtrictly forbid to ſpeak any more in the Name of *Chriſt Jeſus*. III. The State of the Church of *Jeruſalem*, and above all, the wonderful Love and Charity that reigned there.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Chapter we ſee, I. The Accompliſhment of what our Saviour had told the Apoſtles, namely, that they ſhould be caſt into Priſon, and brought before Magiſtrates for his ſake; but 'tis likewiſe to be obſerved, that the Number of Chriſtians increaſed daily, notwithſtanding the Oppoſition of the *Jews*. II. St. *Luke* informs us, that the Apoſtles appearing before the Council, ſpake there with a holy Boldneſs, and with ſo much Strength, that their Enemies were amaſed at it, and had nothing

thing to charge them with. This was an Effect of the Divine Power with which the Apoſtles were endowed, and of the Promiſes Chriſt had made them to aſſiſt them, and give them ſuch Wiſdom as could not be reſiſted. III. The Zeal which the Apoſtles ſhewed upon the Magiſtrates forbidding them to Preach any longer the Goſpel, and their Anſwer, that it was not fit to obey Man rather than God, is an Example, by which we ſee that we ought never to ſuffer the fear of Men to make us ever diſobey God, and to diſſemble the Truth. IV. The fervent Prayer which the Apoſtles offered our Lord, to implore his Aſſiſtance, ſhews the Courage and Confidence with which they were animated. And the Tokens God gave them of his Preſence, by ſhaking the Place where they were aſſembled, was a Confirmation to them that God heard and accepted their Prayer, and that He would always cover them with his Protection. From thence we learn, that we muſt have recourſe to God with Reliance by Prayer, eſpecially when his Glory is concerned; that God hears thoſe who call upon Him; and that when we defend his Cauſe, we ought not to fear the vain Efforts of Men. V. What is ſaid at the end of this Chapter, about the Union and agreement among the Believers, and of the Uſe they made of their Goods, ſhews that the Spirit of Chriſtianity is a Spirit of Charity and Concord, that true Chriſtians have but one Heart and one Soul, and that they willingly and freely exerciſe Charity towards neceſſitous Perſons.

CHAP. V. 1,——16.

I. ST. *Luke* gives the Relation of the Sin of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, and of the Puniſhment God inflicted upon them. II. He makes mention

mention next of the Miracles of the Apoſtles, and the wonderful Progreſs of the Goſpel at *Jeruſalem.*

Reflexions after the Reading.

THESE are the Reflexions that may be made upon the Hiſtory of *Ananias.* I. God ſtruck that Man and his Wife Dead, for having Lyed to St. *Peter*, to the end that that Example might keep in awe all the Members of the Church, and ſupport the Authority of the Apoſtles in the beginning of the Preaching of the Goſpel, and to ſhew the Divinity of the Doctrine they Propagated. II. This event teaches us, that God knows Mens Hearts, and the moſt hidden Things; and that tho' we may be deceived, yet He cannot; and that thoſe who Lye to Men, and particularly to their ſpiritual Guides, upon ſuch Occaſions when they are bound to ſpeak Truth, do Lye to God, and expoſe themſelves to his Vengeance. III. It appears from hence, that it is a great Sin to make Uſe of Falſhood and Deceit in the exerciſe of Charity; that it is in our own Power to give or withhold our Hand, but when once we have devoted a thing to God and to Religious Uſes, we are not allowed to take it back, nor even to retain the ſmalleſt part thereof. IV. We muſt particularly obſerve what is ſaid in this Chapter, concerning the ſurprizing Miracles wrought by the Apoſtles, and the prodigious increaſe of the Church at *Jeruſalem*, as alſo the Love and Reverence that all the World had for the Apoſtles and the Chriſtians: Theſe are Authentick Proofs of the Divinity of the Chriſtian Doctrine and of its Efficacy. And ſince this Progreſs of the Goſpel was the Fruit, not only of the Miracles of the Apoſtles, but likewiſe

likewiſe of the Union that reigned among the Faithful, and of the Innocency of their Manners; we may learn from thence, how effectual the good Life of Chriſtans is, to render the Religion of Chriſt venerable, and to induce Men to glorifie God, and embrace the Profeſſion of the Truth.

CHAP. V. 17,——42.

I. THE Apoſtles are impriſon'd the Second Time, but God delivers them by an Angel, and they continue to Preach the Goſpel. II. They are brought again before the Council, which condemns them to be whip'd, and forbids them to Preach any longer the Doctrine of Chriſt.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we are to obſerve here for our Inſtruction is, I. The Impriſonment of the Apoſtles, and the wonderful Manner by which God cauſed the Gates of the Priſon to be opened by an Angel. This was a token of God's Protecting them, which ought to fill them with Joy and Confidence, and convince their Enemies, that it was in vain for them to oppoſe the Preaching of the Goſpel. II. We ſee that the Apoſtles coming out of the Priſon, went immediately to teach in the Temple, notwithſtanding the Prohibitions they had received; and that being ſummoned for it before the Council, they ſpoke there with great Wiſdom and Conſtancy, declaring that they were obliged to obey God rather than Men. This is a noble inſtance of Courage and Zeal, and a Leſſon to us always to follow the Dictates of our Conſcience, without being afraid of the Threatnings of

of Men; and that neither the Orders nor Interdicts of Magiſtrates ſhould ever hinder us from obeying God, and doing what He commands us. III. What *Gamaliel* ſaid in the Council, merits the following Obſervations: That God made Uſe of the wiſe Advice of this Senator to ſave the Apoſtles, and to hinder the Council from coming to a Reſolution of putting them to Death; that pious and moderate Advices ought to be followed; that we ought never to do any thing thro' Paſſion and raſh Zeal, eſpecially in tmatters of Religion; that the Deſigns, of which God is not the Author, are ſooner or later Defeated of themſelves; but that thoſe which proceed from Him, are infallibly fulfilled, in Spight of the Oppoſition; and that thoſe who withſtand 'em, wage War againſt God. IV. The laſt Reflexion is, that as the Apoſtles having been condemned to be whipt, rejoyced that they had the Honour to ſuffer ſuch a Diſgrace for the Sake of Chriſt, and continued to Preach the Goſpel; ſo we too ought conſtantly to bear, and even with Joy, the evils to which we may be expoſed by doing our Duty, which Duty we ought always to diſcharge with Gladneſs and Perſeverance.

CHAP. VI.

THIS Chapter contains two Parts. I. It repreſents the Eſtabliſhment of Deacons, whoſe Function was to adminiſter the Alms of the Church: And, II. The Accuſation againſt St. *Stephen* before the Council of the Jews.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE have here an Account of the Inſtitution of Deacons, who were appointed

ed by the Apoſtles to diſtribute the Charity of the Believers. Though this Office be at this time aboliſhed in the greateſt Part of the Chriſtian Churches, through the fault of Men, and the diſorder that has crept into it ſeveral Ways, it is nevertheleſs a Divine Inſtitution, and very uſeful for the Edification of the Church. And ſince God thought fit that there ſhould be Perſons appointed for the Adminiſtration of Alms, and that for the ſame Purpoſe there ſhould be choſen wiſe Perſons, and ſuch as were filled with the Holy Ghoſt, it appears from thence, that Charity is a moſt important Duty, that the Alms of the Faithful ought to be diſtributed with great Prudence and Wiſdom, and that it ſhould be done by Men of Integrity, and fearing God, and that they ſhould be appointed by the Church; and in general, none ſhould be put into Eccleſiaſtical Offices, but Perſons that have a good Teſtimony, and that are of known Piety and Probity. II. The Charge which ſome *Jews* brought againſt St. *Stephen*, who was a Man full of Faith and Virtue, ſhews, that good Men, and the moſt Zealous Servants of God, may be expoſed to the Hatred of the World, and to Calumnies; but that ſhould not hinder us from diſcharging our Duty with Courage, nor from fulfilling the Obligations of our Calling, and of our Conſcience.

CHAP. VII.

THIS Chapter contains, I. The Diſcourſe St. *Stephen* made before the Council of the *Jews*: And, II. The relation of his Martyrdom and Death.

Re-

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Deſign of St. *Stephen*, in the Diſcourſe we have read, was to prove, that he was neither an Enemy to God nor the Law, as he was accuſed to be, but that he worſhiped the God of *Abraham* and of the Patriarchs; that Chriſt was the Meſſiah that was to be born from the Poſterity of *Abraham*, and whoſe coming *Moſes* and the Prophets had foretold; that the Covenant of God and His Service were not tied to the Nation of the *Jews*, nor to the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, neither was it confined to the ceremonial Worſhip which *Moſes* had preſcribed; that the *Jews* had at all times been rebellious againſt God; that they had rejected and perſecuted the Prophets; and that therefore it was not ſtrange that they ſhould reject Chriſt, and Perſecute his Servants. We ought to obſerve in this Diſcourſe of St. *Stephen*, the great Zeal wherewith he was animated, and the holy Liberty which he took in reproaching the *Jews* of their Hardneſs, though he knew very well, that in ſpeaking thus, he expoſed himſelf to their Rage, and to the Danger of Loſing his Life. II. We ſee in the next Place, that the *Jews* were ſo tranſported with Rage, as to condemn him to be ſtoned; but that God, for his Encouragement, having cauſed him to ſee Heaven opened, and Jeſus Chriſt ſitting on his right Hand, he endured with Conſtancy that cruel Death; and that at the Time when he was ſtoned he ſhewed his Faith and Charity, by calling upon the Lord with his laſt Breath, and by Praying for thoſe who put him to Death. This Death of the firſt Martyr of the Church, ſhould teach us to undergo with Courage, all the Evils which the Profeſſion of the Truth may bring

bring upon us, and even Death it ſelf, if we be called to it; to pardon thoſe that do us the greateſt Harm, and to pray for them. This Example is a further Proof how ſweet is the Death of true Belivers, and with what Comfort it is attended; which ſhould ſtrongly incite us to Godlineſs, to the end that at our laſt Hour we may likewiſe put our Souls into the Hands of the Lord Jeſus, and ſleep peacefully in expectation of the bleſſed Reſurrection.

CHAP. VIII. 1,——25.

WE ſee here, I. The Perſecution that was raiſed againſt the Church of *Jeruſalem*, after the Death of St. *Stephen*: And, II. How St. *Philip* preached the Goſpel at *Samaria*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. BY the firſt Part of this Chapter, we find that the Death of St. *Stephen*, and the Perſecution that was raiſed againſt the Church of *Jeruſalem*, turned to the advancement of the Goſpel, ſince the Believers, who were thereupon ſcattered, Preached the Word of God in ſeveral Places. Thus we ſee how the Perſecutions which the Enemies of the Church raiſed againſt it, contributed towards its Increaſe, and to the ſpreading the Religion of Chriſt more and more. II. What is ſaid in the ſecond Part of this Chapter, of the Credit which the People of *Samaria* gave to *Simon* the Magician, ſhews that they who know not the Truth, are eaſily ſeduced by Impoſtors; but the Change that happened in that City after St. *Philip* had Preached the Goſpel there, ſhews that Truth will triumph over Error and Falſhood. We have an Example in *Simon*, who conſented to be Baptized, being tranſported

ſported at the Miracles wrought by St. *Philip*, which proves, that the Wicked are ſometimes affected at the Excellency of the Goſpel, ſo far as even to embrace the Profeſſion of it; but not acting upon good Principles, their Converſion is unſincere. Upon what is added, that *Simon* offer'd Money to St. *Peter*, to obtain the Faculty of Communicating the Holy Ghoſt, and the Power of working Miracles; and that St. *Peter* being filled with Indignation, denounced the Judgment of God againſt him; we muſt obſerve, that it is a deteſtable Impiety to make Religion ſubſervient to Covetouſneſs and Ambition, and to pretend to buy or ſell holy Things after what manner ſoever. It may nevertheleſs be conſider'd, that St. *Peter* exhorted *Simon* to repent, and even that that wicked Man intreated the Apoſtles to interceed for him. This teaches us, that we ought never wholly to abandon the greateſt Sinners, nor refuſe them the Aſſiſtance of our Exhortations and Prayers.

CHAP. VIII. 26,——40.

ST. *Luke* relates here the Hiſtory of the Converſion of a Nobleman, who was one of the principal Officers of *Candace*, Queen of *Ethiopia*. That Man was of the Number of thoſe *Gentile* Proſelytes, who had renounced Idolatry, and who came from time to time to worſhip God at *Jeruſalem*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE general Obſervation that may be made upon this Hiſtory is, that God called the Eunuch of Queen *Candace* to the Chriſtian Faith, to ſhew that the Goſpel would be ſoon

ſoon preach'd to all Nations, and by the Means of this Man, to ſpread the true Religion throughout *Ethiopia*. The next Thing remarkable is, that this Lord came to worſhip God at *Jeruſalem*, and that he was employ'd in Reading the Scriptures when God ſent *Philip* to inſtruct him. We may learn from thence, that Providence takes a particular Care of thoſe who have good Intentions, and that God grants a new Meaſure of his Graces to thoſe that make a right Uſe of what they have already received, and ſeek the Truth in Sincerity. The Deſire which the Eunuch ſhewed, to underſtand a Paſſage of *Iſaiah* that he read, and the Docility with which he hearken'd to *Philip*, ſhews, that we muſt labour to be inſtructed in the Truths of Salvation, as well by our ſelves, as by the Aſſiſtance of others. That we ought not to neglect the Inſtructions of ſuch Miniſters as God has appointed, and that we ought to hear them with Docility. *Laſtly*, We find that the Eunuch, after having heard St. *Philip*, deſired to be Baptized; that he made an open Profeſſion of his Faith, and returned to his own Country full of Joy. 'Tis thus, that as ſoon as the Truth is made known to us, we ought to embrace the Profeſſion of it, and never to delay the Diſcharge of our Duty. This likewiſe teaches, that in order to be Chriſtians, we muſt believe with our whole Heart, that Chriſt is the Son of God; and that the Happineſs of knowing Him, and living in his Church, ſhould be all our Comfort, and all our Joy.

CHAP. IX. 1,——21.

THIS is the Hiſtory of the Converſion of St. *Paul*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE ought moſt carefully to attend to this Hiſtory, and conſider, I. That St. *Paul*, who was ſo excellent an Apoſtle, was, before his Converſion, a declared Enemy of *Jeſus Chriſt*. This Apoſtle tells us himſelf thereupon, that God called him in that Condition, to the end that he might make him an illuſtrious Example of his Mercy towards Sinners; nevertheleſs it muſt be remembred, that tho' he perſecuted the Church, it was through Ignorance and a falſe Zeal, whilſt he even thought that he did what was pleaſing to God; as for the reſt of his Life, it was unblameable. II. We have ſeen, that whilſt *Saul* was going to *Damaſcus*, to perſecute the Chriſtians, Chriſt ſtopp'd him near that City by an Apparition that fill'd him with Terror; that He ſpoke to him from Heaven, and ſtruck him with Blindneſs. Our Lord proceded in this manner, becauſe, in the Diſpoſition and Temper in which *Saul* was, it was neceſſary to uſe very violent Methods to cure him of his Prejudices, and to render him tractable. Thus God, out of his Goodneſs and Wiſdom, makes uſe of the moſt proper Means to bring back Sinners from their Wanderings. III. Theſe Words, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me*? ſhew, that Chriſt looks upon that which is done againſt his Members and againſt his Church, as done againſt Himſelf; and the Humility with which *Saul* anſwered: *Lord, what wouldeſt thou have me to do*? ſhews, that when God calls us, we ought to give up our Selves entirely to Him, and to follow his Commands. IV. It muſt be conſider'd, that as ſoon as God had prepared *Saul* to hearken to Him, and to receive what ſhould be told him,

He

He referr'd him to *Ananias*, to be inform'd by him what he was to do, and that in the mean time, He prepared *Ananias* by a Viſion to go and viſit *Saul*, and to inſtruct him; thus God diſpoſed matters with great Wiſdom to finiſh the Work of the Converſion of *Saul*. V. *Laſtly*, We have ſeen how *Saul*, after having been in Faſting and in Prayer for the Space of three Days, recover'd his Sight, and how he was inſtructed and baptized by *Ananias*, and preſently after began to preach the Goſpel. We ought to admire the Power and Goodneſs of God in this Event, which was ſo wholſome to St. *Paul*, and ſo beneficial to the whole Church; and this great and ſudden Change which was wrought in this Apoſtle ſhews, that ſuch as are ſincerely converted, do entirely alter their Opinion and Behaviour, giving open and certain Proofs of the Sincerity of their Converſion.

CHAP. IX. 23,——43.

THERE are three Things to be obſerved here. I. That St. *Paul*, after his Converſion, being perſecuted by the *Jews* at *Damaſcus*, went to *Jeruſalem*, from whence he was driven by a freſh Perſecution, and forced to fly to *Ceſarea*, and to *Tarſus*. II. The happy Condition of the Churches of *Judea*, and of the neighbouring Parts. And, III. the Miracle of the Healing of *Eneas*, and the Raiſing of *Tabitha* from the Dead.

Reflexions after the Reading.

FROM this Portion of Scripture we may gather, I. That as ſoon as St. *Paul* was converted, and began to preach the Goſpel, he was perſecuted by the *Jews*. God thought fit,

by that means, to try the Faithfulneſs of this Apoſtle, and to teach him to ſuffer for *Jeſus Chriſt*; and this Example is a Leſſon to us, that thoſe who would follow the Lord, and lead a godly Life, muſt be prepared to ſuffer the Contradiction of Men. II. What St. *Luke* ſays of the happy State of the Churches of *Judea*, *Galilee*, and *Samaria*, offers two Reflexions to our Mind; *one*, that although God permits the Church to be perſecuted, He likewiſe gives it eaſe; *the other*, that what renders Churches happy and flouriſhing is, when they walk in the Fear of the Lord, and that the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt are multiplied in them. III. The two Miracles related about the End of this Chapter prove, that the Apoſtles wrought the ſame Miracles as our Lord had done whilſt He was on the Earth, which contributed to the Converſion of a great Number of People. We have particularly, in the Hiſtory of *Tabitha*, a noble Example to ſtir us up to Piety and works of Charity; and the Reſurrection of this holy Woman may be look'd on, as a Reward that God was pleaſed to grant to her Piety and Faith, and as a Proof that ſhould confirm us in the Belief of the Reſurrection, and the Hope of a better Life.

CHAP. X.

THIS Chapter contains an Account of the Converſion of *Cornelius*, the Centurion, to the Chriſtian Religion. This Man was a Pagan by Birth, but worſhipped the true God.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THIS Hiſtory is recorded, to ſhew us after what manner the Goſpel began to be preached to the *Gentiles*. Here we muſt admire the Ways which Providence made uſe of for converting *Cornelius*; and how, whilſt God ſent an Angel to him, to induce him to ſeek for St. *Peter*, He diſpoſed that Apoſtle to go to *Cornelius*, which he would not have done, if God had not revealed it to him, that he ought to look upon no Man as unclean, and the Goſpel was to be declared to the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*. To this alluded the Viſion of the Veſſel, in which were Creatures, that the *Jews*, by their Law, were forbid to eat of. Beſides this general Conſideration, it may be obſerved, that the Prayers and Alms of *Cornelius* were called to remembrance by God; that on the ſame Account God ſent an Angel to him, and brought him to the Knowledge of Chriſt by the Miniſtry of St. *Peter*. We may learn from thence how acceptable to God Works of Piety and Charity are, and that He beſtows new Lights and Graces to thoſe who have an upright Heart, and call upon Him, and fear Him. II. We ought ſeriouſly to meditate upon the important Truths that are contained in the Diſcourſe St. *Peter* made at the Houſe of *Cornelius*, and particularly the following: *That God is no reſpecter of Perſons, but that in every Nation, he that feareth Him, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted with Him.* And the other, that *Whoſoever believes in Chriſt, ſhall receive remiſſion of Sins through his Name.* III. The Attention, the Submiſſion and Obedience with which *Cornelius*, and all his Houſe, heard St. *Peter*, ought to teach us to receive the Word of God with the

ſame Diſpoſitions when 'tis declared to us. IV. And *Laſtly*, The Converſion of *Cornelius*, obliges us to render Thanks to God; US, I ſay, who were formerly Heathens, foraſmuch as He then vouchſafed to admit the *Gentiles* into his Covenant, and to pour forth his Spirit and Grace upon them, as well as upon the *Jews*.

CHAP. XI.

THIS Chapter conſiſts of two Parts. I. In the former we ſee that the *Jews* of *Jeruſalem*, who had been converted to the Chriſtian Religion, being offended that St. *Peter* ſhould go to *Cornelius* that was a *Gentile*, they were inform'd by this Apoſtle, how God had made known to him, that he ſhould preach the Goſpel to *Cornelius*, and of the Succeſs of his Preaching. II. In the latter Part, St. *Luke* relates, that the Goſpel ſpread it ſelf in ſeveral Places, and particularly at *Antioch*: he makes mention alſo of a Prophet named *Agabus*, who foretold a Famine.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE ſee in the former Part of this Chapter, that the Chriſtians of *Jeruſalem* were ſcandaliz'd at firſt, becauſe St. *Peter* had been with *Cornelius*; but having learn'd that this Apoſtle went to him by the Order of God, and that even the Holy Ghoſt had been given to *Cornelius*, and thoſe that were with him, they were pacified, and rejoiced that God was pleaſed thus to call the *Gentiles* to Salvation. This teaches us, that inſtead of being jealous of the Favours that God beſtows upon others, we ought to rejoice thereat, eſpecially when they are called to Repentance and everlaſting Life.

II.

II. Upon the latter Part, there may be three Things obſerv'd. The *firſt* is, that the Diſperſion of the Church of *Jeruſalem*, and the Perſecution that was rais'd againſt the Chriſtians, contributed to ſpread the Goſpel in ſeveral Places, and to eſtabliſh ſeveral Churches, particularly the Church of *Antioch*, where the Diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt* began to be called Chriſtians. The *ſecond*, That theſe Churches were founded and entertained by the Miniſtry of *Barnabas*, of *Paul*, and other, Perſons that labour'd for their Edification. This ſhews, that the Miniſtry of the Servants of God is of great Uſe in the Church, provided it be perform'd by good Men, and ſuch as are filled with Faith and the Holy Ghoſt, as were thoſe St. *Luke* mentions. The *third* Conſideration relates to the Prediction that *Agabus* made of a Famine that was to happen. This Prediction proves, that God knows future Things, and that nothing comes to paſs in this World but by his Providence. And the Reſolution the Chriſtians took to make a Collection in *Judea* for their Brethren, is an Example that ſhould provoke us to aſſiſt thoſe that are in Want, and eſpecially thoſe that are our Brethren, and the Members of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

CHAP. XII.

ST. *Luke* relates three Things in this Chapter. I. The Martyrdom of St. *James*, Brother to St. *John*. II. The Impriſonment of St. *Peter*, and his miraculous Deliverance. III. The Death of King *Herod*, who died being ſtruck by an Angel.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Chapter we ſee, I. How the Apoſtle St. *James*, as well as St. *Stephen*, ſealed the Truth of the Goſpel with his Blood; and that the Chriſtian Religion was eſtabliſh'd by the Sufferings of thoſe that preach'd it, which confirms the Truth and Divinity of it. It is to be obſerved, II. That God, who had permitted St. *James* to be put to Death, did likewiſe permit St. *Peter* to be impriſon'd by King *Herod*, but that this Apoſtle was miraculouſly deliver'd by an Angel. This wonderful Deliverance gives us occaſion to own, that tho' God does ſometimes allow the Wicked to execute their Deſigns, yet when it pleaſes Him, He reſtrains them, and ſets bounds to their Wickedneſs, and that He always watches over his faithful Servants. We likewiſe ſee by this Event, how powerful Prayer is, ſince the Church of *Jeruſalem* obtained the Deliverance of St. *Peter*, by the Prayers they put up to God for him. III. The Death of *Herod*, who was eaten of Worms, for a Puniſhment of his Pride, is an Example, that God confounds the Proud, and particularly, that the Perſecutors of the Church do commonly make a fatal End, and that cruel and haughty Princes, ſooner or later, receive the Puniſhment due to their Crimes, and to their Wickedneſs.

CHAP. XIII. 1,——13.

ST. *Paul* and St. *Barnabas* go to *Antioch* in *Cyprus*, and from thence to *Paphos*, where St. *Paul* ſmote a *Jewiſh* Impoſtor with Blindneſs, and where he converted to the Faith the Pro-

Proconſul *Sergius Paulus*, who was the firſt Magiſtrate of that Iſland.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE ſee in the Beginning of this Chapter, that St. *Paul* and St. *Barnabas*, paſſing through ſeveral Places of *Aſia*, and *Greece*, by the Order of the Holy Ghoſt, and after that the Miniſters of the Church of *Antioch* had prayed and faſted, did ſucceſsfully preach the Goſpel in thoſe Parts. Theſe are Tokens of the Divinity of their Calling; but we have eſpecially one remarkable Proof in the Converſion of the Governour of *Paphos*, and in the miraculous Puniſhment of *Elimas*, who would have diſſuaded the Governour from embracing the Chriſtian Religion. We ſee in theſe two Perſons, one of whom believed the Preaching of St. *Paul*, as 'tother oppoſed it with all his Might, that the Word of God is received by ſome, and rejected by others; and that thoſe who withſtand the Truth, and turn away others from Faith and Piety, do draw upon themſelves the ſevereſt Judgments of God.

CHAP. XIII. 14,——52.

I. ST. *Paul*, in a Diſcourſe which he makes to the *Jews* of *Antioch*, ſhews, that God, according to the Promiſes He had given to their Fathers, had ſent *Jeſus Chriſt* into the World; that this *Jeſus*, whom they had crucified, was riſen again; that He was the Meſſiah; and that all thoſe who ſhould believe in Him, would obtain Salvation. II. Several Perſons, as well *Jews* as *Gentiles*, believing the Preaching of St. *Paul*, the *Jews* were ſo provoked at them, as to drive away him and *Barnabas*;

bas; but the Apoſtles declared to them, that ſince they rejected the Goſpel, they would from that Time forwards Preach it to the *Gentiles*, and ſo left them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Diſcourſe of St. *Paul*, which we have now read, is an abſtract of the Chriſtian Doctrine. I. This Apoſtle proves to the *Jews*, that Chriſt is born of the Race of *David*, and that it is He who is the promiſed Meſſiah, which He ſhews by the Teſtimony of *John* the Baptiſt, and by the Prediction of the Prophets. He declares to them next, that this Jeſus, who was Crucified at *Jeruſalem*, was raiſed from the Dead, conformably to the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament. *Laſtly*, He teaches them, that the Deſign of the coming of Chriſt, was to obtain for Men the Remiſſion of Sins; that accordingly all ſuch as believed in Him ſhould be juſtified; but that thoſe who rejected Him ſhould be excluded from Salvation. Since this is the Sum of the Chriſtian Religion, we ought ſeriouſly to attend thereto, and to obſerve, that it is only by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and by obedience to the Goſpel, that we can be ſaved. II. As for the effect of St. *Paul*'s Diſcourſe, we ſee that ſeveral believed his Preaching, but that the *Jews* continued Obſtinately in their Unbelief, which was the Reaſon why this Apoſtle told 'em that he would turn to the *Gentiles*. This ſhews how different are the Effects which the Preaching of the Goſpel produces; that ſome grow better by it, others worſe; that the wicked, inſtead of yielding to Truth, oppoſe it, and harden themſelves in their Unbelief, and that at laſt God does juſtly forſake thoſe who judge themſelves unworthy of Everlaſting Life.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

I. ST. *Paul* and St. *Barnabas* Preach at *Iconium*. II. From thence they go to *Lystria*, where having healed a Man deprived of his Limbs, the Inhabitants of that Place took them for Gods, which gave an occasion to St. *Paul*, to exhort them to renounce Idolatry. III. Soon after, this Apostle was Stoned by the People of the Town, whom the *Jews* had stirred up against him; but God having saved his Life, he went away to other Places, and then returned to *Antioch*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE continue to see that the Apostles exercised their Ministry with great Zeal, and in the midst of Persecutions, and that St. *Paul* in particular felt every where the Rage of the *Jews*, since he was in Danger of being stoned with *Barnabas* at *Iconium*, and afterwards was actually stoned at *Lystria*, and even left for Dead; but we likewise see that God preserved the Apostles in the Dangers to which they were exposed, that He wrought great Mirarles by them, and that although they met with great Opposition from the *Jews*, they had the Comfort of bringing several Gentiles to the Faith. II. We ought next most seriously to observe the Zeal and Humility that St. *Paul* shewed when the Inhabitants of *Lystria* took him and *Barnabas* for Gods, and would have paid them divine Honours. This teaches us, that we ought not to seek our own Glory, and that our great aim should be to glorifie God alone, and to cause others to know and worship Him. III. The Discourse made to the *Lycaoneans* shews, that God did at all times reveal Him-

Himſelf to Mankind, by the Works of Nature and Providence, and has always given them evidences of his Goodneſs. Upon which we ought to conſider, that if the Bleſſings God beſtows upon Men in a natural Sate, ſhould engage them to Love and Serve Him, we are much more obliged thereto; we, I ſay, to whom He has revealed Himſelf by the Goſpel, and to whom He has given ſuch ſtrong Proofs of his Love, by ſending his Son Jeſus Chriſt into the World. *Laſtly*, the Care which the Apoſtles took to go to ſeveral Places, that they might exhort the Faithful, and chiefly eſtabliſh Paſtors in every Church, ſhews the neceſſity of the holy Miniſtry, and that the Will of God is, that there ſhould be every where Miniſters to teach, to exhort, and to govern the Church.

CHAP XV.

THESE are the Contents of this Chapter. I. A Diſpute being raiſed in the Church of *Antioch*, by reaſon that the *Jews*, who had been converted to Chriſtianity, inſiſted that the Gentiles, who likewiſe embraced the ſame Faith, ought to be Circumciſed as the *Jews*, and obſerve the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moſes*. II. St. *Paul* and St. *Barnabas* were ſent to *Jeruſalem* to conſult the Apoſtles upon this queſtion, who being met together, declared that the Gentiles were not obliged to obſerve Circumciſion and the legal Ceremonies, but that it would be ſufficient for them to believe in Chriſt Jeſus, and to obey the Goſpel. And this is what the Apoſtles communicated to the Church of *Antioch*, in a Letter which they ſent by St. *Paul* and St. *Barnabas*. III. After which, thoſe two Apoſtles departed from thence to other Places.

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Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have here a very plain Explication of the Doctrine of Juſtification, on which Account this Chapter deſerves a particular Attention; it muſt be obſerved here, I. That the Queſtion propoſed was not to know whether the Gentiles, in order to Salvation, were obliged to keep the Commandments of Chriſt, and to do good Works; but whether they were obliged to Submit themſelves to Circumciſion, and the reſt of the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moſes*. II. It muſt be next remembred, that the Apoſtles determined two Things upon this Queſtion: The *Firſt*, that the Converted Gentiles ought not to be obliged to Circumciſe themſelves, and practiſe the *Jewiſh* Ceremonies; but that 'twas ſufficient to Salvation, that they ſhould ſincerely believe in Chriſt. This the Apoſtles proved, becauſe God had ſpread his Spirit upon the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, and had given them the Faith; and even from the Nature of the *Moſaical* Ceremonies, as well as by the Oracles of the Prophets. This is alſo the Doctrine which St. *Paul* lays down in his Epiſtles, where he teaches, that *we are Juſtified by Faith alone in Jeſus Chriſt without the Works of the Law*. The *Second* thing which the Apoſtles declared was, that the Gentiles ſhould abſtain from what had been ſacrificed to Idols, from things Strangled, and from Blood. The reaſon of this Prohibition was, becauſe the Uſe of theſe things, as well as Fornication, were Part of the Idolatrous Worſhip of the *Gentiles*, and that therefore if Chriſtians did not abſtain from theſe things, it might have drawn them into Idolatry, and confirmed the Gentiles in their falſe Religion. It appears from hence, that the Apoſtles have not excuſed Men from the Obſervation

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of the Moral Law, but that they have only diſpenſed with the Ceremonial Law. And that, on the contrary, in teaching that we are Juſtified by Faith, they eſtabliſh the neceſſity of good Works, ſince Faith cannot be ſincere if it does not produce good Works, and Obedience to the Goſpel. III. As for what relates to the Separation of St. *Barnabas* from St. *Paul*, mentioned by St. *Luke* at the end of this Chapter, we ſee indeed therein Tokens of humane Weakneſs, which the ſacred Writers have not concealed from us; but however it appears, that both theſe holy Men did ſtill attend their Duty, and laboured inceſſantly in advancing the Kingdom of Chriſt.

CHAP. XVI. 1,——15.

ST. *Paul* calls *Timothy* to the Miniſtry, and after having been in divers Places, he arrives at *Philippi*, where he Preaches the Goſpel, and where a Woman named *Lidia* was converted to the Chriſtian Faith.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THERE are two things to be obſerved, in the relation St. *Luke* gives of the Calling *Timothy* to the holy Miniſtry. The *Firſt* is, that *Timothy*, who was ſo excellent a Servant of God, had been Educated in Piety; and that tho' he was Young, every Body gave him a good Character, by which we ſee that none ſhould be ſettled in the Miniſtry, but Perſons that fear God from their Youth, and have the Teſtimony of a good and holy Life. The *Second*, that St. *Paul*, who condemned the Circumciſion when they attempted to impoſe it on the *Gentiles* as a neceſſary Duty, did notwithſtanding circumciſe *Timothy*, leſt

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the *Jews* ſhould reject his Miniſtry, under pretence that his Father was a *Gentile*. This is an Example of Prudence and Charity, by which we are taught, that in indifferent Matters we muſt accommodate our ſelves as much as poſſible to humane Weakneſs, to avoid all that may give Offence, and to have Regard to what may moſt contribute to the Peace and Edification of the Church. Upon what St. *Luke* ſays, that the Spirit did not ſuffer St. *Paul* to go to *Aſia*, and that he was warned by a Viſion to Preach the Goſpel in *Macedonia*, we are to obſerve, that it was God who guided the Apoſtles to the Places where they could do moſt good, and where their Preſence was moſt neceſſary. 'Tis thus, that God does not always think fit, that the Goſpel ſhould be Preached in all kinds of Places, but He reveals it to certain People rather than to others, for Reaſons which He reſerves to Himſelf. *Laſtly*, St. *Luke* tells us, that St. *Paul* Preached the Goſpel ſucceſsfully at *Philippi*, and that there was a Woman called *Lydia*, who hearkened to the Apoſtle, and whoſe Heart God opened. This ſhews us, that Faith is produced by hearing the Word of God, and by the Efficacy of his Grace, which penetrates and melts the Heart. We have likewiſe in this Woman an Example of Docility, Zeal and Charity, which we ought to ſet before our ſelves for a Pattern.

CHAP. XVI. 16,——40.

WE have here, I. The relation of a Tumult raiſed againſt *Paul* and *Silas*, while they were at *Philippi*, becauſe that Apoſtle had delivered a Maid Servant from an evil Spirit wherewith ſhe was Poſſeſſed. II. St. *Paul* and *Silas* were both Scourged and caſt into Priſon,

but being wonderfully delivered by God, the Jaylor was converted to Chriſtianity.

Reflexions after the Reading.

UPON this Hiſtory we are to obſerve; I. That St. *Paul* having delivered a Maid Servant from an evil Spirit, with which ſhe was Poſſeſſed; the Maſters of the ſaid Servant, inſtead of being affected with the Miracle, perceiving they had loſt the Profit ſhe had brought to them by Divination, ſtirred up the Magiſtrates againſt this Apoſtle. This ſhews how great a Power there is in ſelf-intereſt, to excite the Paſſions of Men, and to hinder them from knowing, and receiving the Truth. II. We are to obſerve, that St. *Paul* and *Silas*, having been ſcourged and impriſoned, by order of the Magiſtrates of *Philippi*, ſhewed a wonderful Conſtancy, even ſo far as to praiſe God, and ſing Pſalms in the Priſon; Thus Chriſtians receive not only with Patience, but likewiſe with Joy, the Evils they are expoſed to, for the ſake of Chriſt. III. We ſee, that God opened the Doors of the Priſon by an *Earthquake*, and that the Apoſtles had the Comfort of Converting the Jaylor. This is a remarkable Inſtance of the divine Protection over his faithful Servants; whereby we may perceive, that God never wants means to deliver them; and that all that was done againſt the Apoſtles turned to the Glory of God, to the Propagation of the Goſpel, and their greateſt Comfort. IV. We ſee at the end of this Chapter, the Allegation of St. *Paul*, that he was a Citizen of *Rome*, to oblige the Magiſtrates of *Philippi* to own the wrong they were in, for having cauſed him and *Silas* to be Scourged and Impriſoned, without any Form of Juſtice. This he did, to ſhew his Innocency, and for the Honour of the Goſpel,

Goſpel, which he Preached; as for the reſt, it appeared plain enough, that St. *Paul* did not fear the ſufferings, ſince if he had declared at firſt, that he was a Citizen of *Rome*, he might have avoided both the Scourging and Impriſonment. Thus we ſee, that he joyned great Prudence to an admirable Patience, and a profound Humility.

CHAP. XVII. 1,—15.

I. ST. *Paul* and *Silas* Preach the Goſpel with Succeſs at *Theſſalonica*, but the Jews having ſtirred up the Magiſtrates and People of that City againſt them, they go to *Berea*, and there convert ſeveral Perſons. II. But being Perſecuted there again by the *Jews*, St. *Paul* leaves that Town, and goes to *Athens*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Arrival of St. *Paul* and *Silas* at *Theſſalonica*, and at *Berea*, their Preaching in thoſe two Cities, and the Tumult which the *Jews* raiſed againſt them, ſhews that the Apoſtles were expoſed to continual Perſecutions on the ſide of the Jews, who were the moſt bitter Enemies of the Goſpel; but that they had likewiſe the Comfort of gaining every where Souls to Chriſt. II. But that which is moſt particularly to be obſerved here is, the Example of the faithful at *Berea*, who, as St. *Paul* tells us, received chearfully the Word of God, and examined the Scriptures, to ſee whether what St. *Paul* Preached to them, was agreeable thereto. From thence we ought to learn to receive the Truth with Docility and Readineſs, and at the ſame time, with Knowledge and Diſcernment, and to that effect, to examine by the Word of God, the Doctrine that is Preach-

ed to us, ſo that we may receive nothing that is not conformable to that divine Word, which is the only Rule of our Faith, and to ſubmit our ſelves obediently to all that agrees therewith.

CHAP. XVII. 16,——34.

I. ST. *Paul* being at *Athens*, which was a very conſiderable City of *Greece*, declares the Goſpel there: And, II. he makes an excellent Diſcourſe to wean the *Athenians* from Idolatry, and to give them the Knowledge of the true God, and of *Jeſus Chriſt*. III. The Preaching of St. *Paul* was attended with the Converſion of ſeveral Perſons.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we are to obſerve here is, I. The great Zeal of St. *Paul*, who being concerned to ſee the City of *Athens* over-run with Idolatry, reſolved to preach the Goſpel there; and being intreated by ſome Philoſophers to inform them of the Doctrine he taught, did not ſcruple to diſcourſe to them upon the true Religion. In Imitation of this Apoſtle, we ought to be lively touch'd when we ſee Men engag'd in Sin and Error, and to lay hold upon all Occaſions that offer, to deliver them from thence. II. We may have obſerved in the Diſcourſe that St. *Paul* made to the *Athenians*, on one ſide, the Wiſdom and Prudence of this Apoſtle, who took a Handle, even from their Superſtitions, to ſpeak to them about their true God; and on the other, the Evidence and Force wherewith he proved to them, by the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt Arguments, and by the Teſtimony of their own Poets, that there is but one God, Almighty, and

and All-Gracious, who has created all Things; and that it is an extream Folly, and the greateſt of Errors, to worſhip Idols of Gold, Silver, or Stone, as did the *Gentiles*. The Diſcourſe of St. *Paul*, contains the principal Truths of Religion: We learn from thence, that there is but one only God, Creator and Preſerver of the World; that this God is not far from every one of us; that He does not ſtand in need of our Service, or any thing elſe from us, ſince it is He that gives us all, Life, Motion, and Being. But above all, we ought to attend to theſe Words, which are the Abſtract of the Doctrine and Duties of the Goſpel, that *God now commandeth all Men every where to repent; becauſe He hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs, by that Man whom He hath ordained.* All theſe Truths, which St. *Paul* teaches us here, tend to ſtir us up to ſerve God, to fear Him, to love Him, and to obey the Goſpel. We ſee, III. and *Laſtly*, that this Diſcourſe of St. *Paul* was attended with the Converſion of ſome Perſons, but that the greateſt Part of thoſe who heard him continued in Unbelief. Thus it is, that the Preaching of the Word of God operates Converſion in ſome, whilſt others ſcoff at and reject it.

CHAP. XVIII.

I. ST. *Paul* dwells at *Corinth* a Year and a half, where he converts a great Number of People, but is accuſed by the *Jews* before the Magiſtrates. II. From thence he goes to *Epheſus*, to *Jeruſalem*, to *Antioch*, and other Places, to viſit the Churches, and to confirm them in the Faith. III. There is mention made about the End of this Chapter of *Apollos*,

who was a Minister of the Gospel, famous for his Zeal, and his great Talents.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. IN what St. *Luke* relates of the Stay St. *Paul* made at *Corinth*, we may observe the Zeal wherewith this Apostle laboured every where for the Advancement of the Kingdom of Christ, his Disinterestedness, and his Prudence, which appeared by his choosing rather to work with his own Hands for his Subsistance, than to be maintained at the Charge of the Church; the Crosses and Troubles he met with from the *Jews*; the Protection wherewith God cover'd him; and the Comfort he had in Converting a great Number of People in that City, and of Founding there a very noble Church. Thus the Christian Religion was more and more established by the Preaching of the Apostles, and in spight of all Oppositions of the *Jews*, and of other Enemies of the Truth. II. The several Journeys and Voyages of St. *Paul*, related in this Chapter, shew that he was continually employed in the Functions of his Office, and that he labour'd with indefatigable Application in the Edification of the Churches. 'Tis thus that the Ministers of Christ, and in general all Christians, ought to lay themselves out, with all their Might, for the Glory of God, and Salvation of Men. III. What is here said concerning *Apollos*, of his Zeal, and his Eloquence, and of his other great Gifts, and of the extraordinary Effects of his Ministry, should make us acknowledge, that God grants a most precious Favour to the Churches, when He sends them Teachers and Ministers zealous and powerful in the holy Scriptures, and endowed with the necessary Talents

Talents and Gifts for Inſtruction and Edification; and it ought likewiſe to engage us to beſeech God, that He would always raiſe up ſuch like Men.

CHAP. XIX. 1,——20.

I. ST. *Paul* preaches the Goſpel in the City of *Epheſus*, and does ſeveral Miracles there. II. Certain *Jews* attempting to caſt out evil Spirits in the Name of *Jeſus*, are ill treated by thoſe who were poſſeſs'd with the ſaid Spirits. III. Several Perſons addicted to Magick were converted, and gave publick Tokens of their Repentance.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter ſets before our Eyes, the wonderful Succeſs of St. *Paul*'s Miniſtry in the City of *Epheſus*. That Apoſtle Baptized there certain Diſciples, who, till then, had only been inſtructed in the Doctrine of *John* the Baptiſt; but as ſoon as they were Baptized in the Name of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and St. *Paul* had laid his Hands on them, they received the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. Beſides theſe, he converted there a great Number of Perſons, in ſpight of the Oppoſition of the *Jews*; he there wrought ſurprizing Miracles; and ſeveral People that practiſed the Magick Art, renounced their Superſtition, and their Impiety. Theſe are ſo many Proofs of the Divinity of St. *Paul*'s Vocation, and of the Doctrine which he preached. To this general Obſervation, we may add two particular ones. The *firſt* is, upon what happened to the *Jewiſh* Exorciſts, who, endeavouring to drive out Devils in the Name of *Jeſus*, were ill treated by thoſe whom

the wicked Spirits poſſeſs'd. This tended to convince the *Jews*, and all the World, that it was none but the Apoſtles, and ſuch as believed in Chriſt, who were really able to work Miracles, and had Power over the unclean Spirits; and that it does not belong to wicked Men, or to Hypocrites, to take the Name of the Lord in their Mouths. The *ſecond* relates to what is ſaid in this Chapter, that divers People came to confeſs their Sins, among whom there were ſome, who having practiſed Magick, and unlawful Arts, choſe rather to burn the Books treating upon thoſe Subjects, than to ſell them, tho' they would have brought them in conſiderable Sums. This Example is remarkable; it teaches us, that thoſe who are truly Penitent, do not ſcruple to own their Faults, to give publick Tokens of their Repentance, and to renounce all that has been to themſelves, or might be to others, an occaſion of Sin and Scandal, tho' it be never ſo precious, or dear and profitable to them.

CHAP. XIX. 21,——40.

THIS is the Hiſtory of a Tumult raiſed againſt St. *Paul* at *Epheſus*, by a Silverſmith named *Demetrius*, who made great Advantage by ſelling little Temples of Silver, formed after the Model of a famous Temple which was in this City, and which was devoted to a Goddeſs of the *Heathens*, named *Diana*, that Man finding that St. *Paul*, by preaching againſt Idols, made him loſe all his profit, ſtirred up the People againſt him; but the Riot was appeaſed by the Secretary of the City.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we are to obſerve in general upon the Account of the Sedition which was raiſed at *Epheſus* againſt St. *Paul* is, I. That it was brought about by ſome Handy-crafts Men, who feared, that if the People left off worſhipping Idols, their Trade would loſe its credit, and their Gain be diminiſhed; to obviate which, they made uſe of a Pretext of Religion and of Zeal for the Goddeſs *Diana*. We may ſee by this Example, how much the Love of Money prevails upon the Minds of Men; that it is what raiſes their Paſſions moſt, and is the Occaſion that they cannot bear the Truth, when contradictory to their Intereſt. We ſee likewiſe in this Hiſtory, that Men commonly cover their Paſſions, and their private Intereſt, with an appearance of Zeal, and a Pretence for Religion. This great Tumult which was raiſed at *Epheſus*, and which was not quieted but with difficulty, by the Secretary of that City, ſhews likewiſe, that Tumults and Seditions are very dangerous, and that they may produce fatal Conſequences; that therefore we ought to avoid all that tends to promote them, and that wiſe Men are bound to prevent and to calm them by all poſſible Means. Finally, It appears by what we have read, that St. *Paul* was expoſed to continual Dangers, but that God always preſerv'd him from them.

CHAP. XX. 1,——16.

I. ST. *Paul* leaves *Epheſus*, and goes to *Troas*, where he preaches the Goſpel to the Chriſtians of that City, and raiſes one from the

the Dead. II. From thence he goes to *Miletus*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THERE are two Things to be obſerved in this firſt Part of the *Twentieth* Chapter. I. The *firſt*, that St. *Paul* being arrived at *Troas*, and the Chriſtians met together on the firſt Day of the Week to break Bread, that is to ſay, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, this Apoſtle attended that Meeting, and preached to them pretty late in the Night. From thence we may gather, that the Apoſtles and the firſt Chriſtians aſſembled themſelves to ſerve God, and for mutual Edification; that *Sunday* was ſet apart for that purpoſe; that the holy Supper was celebrated in thoſe Meetings, and Diſcourſes made for the Inſtruction and Exhortation of the Faithful. Thus we ſee plainly by this Chapter, that the Obſervation of *Sunday*, publick Aſſemblies, the Participation of the holy Supper of our Lord, and the Exhortations of the Paſtors and Miniſters, are of as ancient Uſe as Chriſtianity it ſelf, and of Divine Inſtitution. II. The *ſecond* thing which deſerves our Attention is, that St. *Paul* reſtored Life to a young Man, who fell from the upper Room of the Houſe where the Believers were gather'd together. This was a Miracle very remarkable. We ſee thereby the Confirmation of the Promiſes which Chriſt had made, when He told his Apoſtles and Diſciples, that they ſhould work as great Miracles as He himſelf had done. Wherefore this event, which, without doubt, comforted the Chriſtians of *Troas*, and ſtrengthen'd them in the Religion of Chriſt, ought to produce the ſame Effect in us, and convince us more

more and more of the Divinity of the Goſpel, and particularly of the Doctrine of riſing from the Dead.

CHAP. XX. 17,——38.

ST. *Paul* having cauſed the Paſtors of *Epheſus* to come to *Miletus*, made them a grave and ſerious Exhortation before he parted from them. This Exhortation is very fine, and exceedingly pathetick, and ought to be read and meditated with great Attention.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN the Diſcourſe which St. *Paul* made to the Paſtors of *Epheſus*, before he left them, we ſee with how great Integrity, Zeal, and Diſintereſtedneſs he had diſcharged his Miniſtry at that City for the Space of three Years; his Conſtancy under Afflictions, his great Piety, the Care he took to exhort and teach, as well in Publick, as from Houſe to Houſe; his ſettled Reſolution of ſerving the Lord faithfully, even to the end; of ſuffering every thing, and even of ſacrificing his Life with Joy, for the Love of Him; we ſee there alſo, the grave and affecting Exhortations which he made to the Miniſters of *Epheſus*, proteſting that he was innocent of their Blood; and the ardent and tender Wiſhes, by which he recommends them to God, and the whole Church over which they were appointed. From hence the Miniſters of the Goſpel may learn faithfully to diſcharge their Office, and to fulfil the Duties thereof with Diligence, Zeal, and Sincerity, to watch carefully over the Lord's Flock, and to take heed that no falſe or offenſive Doctrines ſlide in among them; never to conceal any thing that may be

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of Uſe to thoſe who are intruſted to their Care; to warn them, not only publickly, but privately alſo; to ſuffer patiently the Troubles to which they are expoſed; to pray continually for their Flocks; and *Laſtly*, to have no regard nor value for themſelves, their own Intereſts, nor even their Lives, provided they may have the Satisfaction of finiſhing their Courſe, and faithfully Diſcharging the Miniſtry which they have received from the Lord *Jeſus*. As for us, we muſt own from what we have read, that the Office of Paſtors is of the greateſt Importance; that God is very gracious to us when He ſends us faithful Miniſters; and that when they have warned and inſtructed us with fidelity, they will not be anſwerable for our Souls if we don't do our Duty. The Tears which the Paſtors and Chriſtians of *Epheſus* ſhed at parting with St. *Paul*, and the Grief they ſhewed when he told them they ſhould ſee him no more, proves how dearly they loved him, and is likewiſe an argument how ſtrong that Love ought to be, that unites the Paſtors to their Flocks, and how much Chriſtians ſhould dread to be deprived of the Miniſtry of the faithful Servants of God.

CHAP. XXI. 1,——16.

ST. *Paul* parting from *Miletus*, arrives at *Tyre*, and from thence to *Ceſarea*, where he is warned by a Prophet, that he ſhould be impriſon'd at *Jeruſalem*, and deliver'd over to the *Gentiles*. This Prediction, which very much afflicted the Faithful, did not affright St. *Paul*, who ſhewed, that he neither feared Bonds, nor even Death; and ſo he ſet forwards for *Jeruſalem*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THAT which is principally to be obſerved in this Reading is, I. The Prediction of *Agabus*, who warned St. *Paul* that he ſhould be caſt into Priſon at *Jeruſalem*, and the Effect it wrought both upon the Chriſtians that were preſent, and St. *Paul* himſelf. This Prediction ſhews, that nothing befel that Apoſtle, but by the ſpecial Will of God; and that it was the Lord who expoſed him to thoſe Perſecutions, and who thought fit that he ſhould be deliver'd to the *Gentiles*, and afterwards carried to *Rome*, to the end that he might bear witneſs to the Goſpel every where. II. The Conſtancy and the Zeal which St. *Paul* ſhewed, by declaring to the Faithful, who beſought him with Tears, not to go up to *Jeruſalem*, that he was ready not only to be bound, but to ſuffer Death for the Name of the Lord *Jeſus*, ſhews, that this faithful Servant of God was entirely devoted to Chriſt, and that nothing was capable of ſhaking his Conſtancy. This is an Example that ought to be imitated by all Chriſtians, but particularly by the Miniſters of the Goſpel. III. The Reſignation which the Believers teſtified for the Will of the Lord, by no longer oppoſing St. *Paul*'s Journey, ſhould likewiſe ſerve for an Example to us, teaching us to ſubmit to all that God pleaſes, as ſoon as He manifeſts his Will to us, and always to ſay, *Let the Will of the Lord be done.*

CHAP. XXI. 17,——40.

I. ST. *Paul* being arrived at *Jeruſalem*, goes into the Temple with four other Perſons, who, as well as he, had made the Vow of *Na-*

Nazareth, to the end that he might obſerve what was ordered by the Law of *Moſes*, in the like Caſes. II. Though he did it by the advice of the other Apoſtles, to ſhew that he was not an Enemy of the Law, as he had been accuſed; the *Jews* did nevertheleſs raiſe a Tumult againſt him, charging him falſely with having profaned the Temple, and brought *Gentiles* into it; and they would have put him to Death, if the Captain of thoſe that Guarded the Temple, had not reſcued him out of their Hands.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THERE are *Three* things to be conſidered upon what we have here read: I. What St. *Paul* did, when he went to the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, and purified himſelf, according to the Cuſtom of the *Jews*, muſt be looked upon as an Act of Prudence and Charity, and which tended to diſprove the Accuſation that he was an Enemy to the Law of *Moſes*. This behaviour of St. *Paul*, teaches us to accommodate our ſelves as much as we can, and to comply eſpecially in indifferent Matters, with thoſe who are prejudiced againſt us, and to neglect nothing to bring them off from their wrong Notions. II. That notwithſtanding what St. *Paul* did to undeceive the *Jews*, they roſe up againſt him in ſuch a manner, as to endeavour to take away his Life. Theſe are the common effects of Paſſion and Prejudice; they do ſo blind the Eye of thoſe whom they poſſeſs, that nothing can undeceive them. III. And *Laſtly*, it is to be obſerved, that Providence delivered St. *Paul* from the Rage of the *Jews*, by the Means of the Tribune, making Uſe, at the ſame Time, of what this Apoſtle had done, in Compliance with

with the *Jews*, to cauſe him to be ſeized and delivered by that very People, into the Hands of the Gentiles, as had been foretold. Thus God ſecures thoſe that ſerve Him, and all that Men do againſt 'em, tends only to accompliſh the ends of Providence.

CHAP. XXII.

I. THIS is a Diſcourſe, in which St. *Paul*, to juſtifie himſelf from the Accuſation of the *Jews*, that he was an Enemy to their Law and Nation, gives the Hiſtory of his Life and Converſion. II. But the *Jews* preſſing that he ſhould be put to Death, the Captain ordered that he ſhould be examined by Scourging, which however was not done, becauſe this Apoſtle declared that he was a Citizen of *Rome*; but he was ſent back, that he might appear before the Council of the *Jews*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Deſign of St. *Paul*'s Diſcourſe, which is here related, was to ſhew the *Jews* he was no Enemy to their Religion, as they pretended; that, ſo far from it, he himſelf had been very zealous for that Religion in which he was brought up at *Jeruſalem*, inſomuch that he was formerly a moſt violent Perſecutor of the Chriſtians; but if he had embraced the Religion of Chriſt, and if he had preached it every where, he did it to obey the Calling which the Lord made to him out of Heaven. In this Behaviour of St. *Paul* towards the *Jews* we may obſerve, that he endeavoured both to juſtifie himſelf, and to pacifie them, but that he did not however diſſemble the Truth. This teaches us to ſpeak, and act always with Temper and Prudence,

dence, when we have to do with Perſons prejudiced againſt us, and at the ſame time, with Courage and Firmneſs, without ever uſing Diſguiſes, and without diſſembling the Truth through Fear. .The Rage and Paſſion, into which the *Jews* fell, when St. *Paul* ſaid, that the Lord had ſent him to the Gentiles, ſhews that the chief Cauſe of their Hatred againſt this Apoſtle, was the averſion they had to the Heathens. This Procedure of the *Jews* ſhews likewiſe, that nothing can undeceive People who labour under ſtrong Prejudices. *Laſtly*, St. *Luke* teaches us, that St. *Paul* being upon the point of undergoing an Examination by Scourging, thought fit, upon this Occaſion, to make Uſe of his Privilege as a Citizen of *Rome*; he did it, becauſe it was a lawful Means of ſecuring himſelf againſt the Violence and Injuſtice they were going to do him; from whence we may conclude, that it is lawful to make Uſe of our Right, and to employ all juſt and reaſonable Methods to defend our ſelves, when we are in Danger of being Oppreſſed or Wronged.

CHAP. XXIII.

THIS Chapter conſiſts of *Two* Parts. We ſee, I. What paſſed when St. *Paul* appeared before the Council of the *Jews*. II. The Relation of a Conſpiracy, which forty *Jews* had formed to take away this Apoſtle's Life, and the manner in which he was preſerved.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may make four Reflexions upon this Chapter. I. That St. *Paul* being unjuſtly Struck, by the order of the high Prieſt *Ananias*, he threatned him with the Judgment of God, but

but that he nevertheleſs declared the reſpect he bore to his Character, when he was acquainted, that he who had cauſed him to be thus ſtruck, was the High Prieſt, which he did not know at firſt. What we are to learn from thence is, that we ought to ſpeak reſpectfully of our Superiors; and at the ſame Time, that God will puniſh unjuſt Judges, and ſuch as abuſe their Authority. II. That St. *Paul* occaſioned a diviſion between the *Phariſes* and *Sadducees*, by ſaying, that he was Arraigned for Believing the Reſurrection of the Dead. He acted wiſely therein, to the end, that he might not be oppreſſed by the *Jews*, and to ſhew that he taught that which the *Jews* and *Phariſees* themſelves believed concerning the Reſurrection. III. St. *Luke* informs us here, that God appeared to St. *Paul* by Night, and bid him fear nothing, but to be prepared to go, and bear Witneſs to the Truth at *Rome*. This was neceſſary for the ſupport of the Apoſtle, in the midſt of thoſe troubles which the *Jews* excited againſt him, to inſtruct him in the Deſigns of Providence, and to incourage him to make every where an open Profeſſion of his Faith. IV. We ſee in the laſt Place, that forty *Jews* having conſpired to ſlay St. *Paul*, he was preſerved from that Danger by a young Man, his Nephew, who gave the Captain Notice thereof. We may obſerve from thence, how great the Rage of the *Jews* was againſt St. *Paul*, and to what Exceſſes Hatred, joyned with a falſe Zeal for Religion, is capable of hurrying Men. 'Tis moreover, a Leſſon for us to avoid raſh Oaths and Vows. Finally, we may admire, in this event, the Means that Providence uſes to preſerve innocent and good Men from impending Dangers.

CHAP. XXIV.

I. ST. *Paul* being accuſed by the *Jews*, before the Governour *Felix*, gives an Account of his Behaviour and his Faith. II. *Felix* having afterwards deſired to hear St. *Paul*, that Apoſtle diſcourſed of the Duties of Juſtice, of Temperance, and the laſt Judgment, in ſuch a manner, as filled him with Terror. However, St *Paul* remained a Priſoner at *Ceſarea*, for the ſpace of two Years.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WHAT we are to conſider firſt upon this Chapter is, that St. *Paul* being very unjuſtly accuſed by the *Jews*, before the Governour *Felix*, defended himſelf by a Diſcourſe full of Strength and Weight; in which, whilſt he juſtifies himſelf from the Accuſations brought againſt him, and whilſt he denys thoſe things which the *Jews* falſly laid to his Charge, he does nevertheleſs make an open Confeſſion of the Faith and Doctrine which he taught. We may learn from this Inſtance of Sincerity and Zeal, that neither Fear, nor any other Conſideration, ought to hinder us from aſſerting the Truth. II. We ſhould in the next Place, ſeriouſly obſerve the Terror, with which *Felix* was ſeized, when St. *Paul* talked to him about Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and the great Judgment Day; as well as the Obdurateneſs of that Governour, who finding himſelf reproached by his own Conſcience, with Unjuſtice, Impurity, and ſeveral other Crimes, would not ſuffer the Apoſtle to proceed. Here we ſee the Power of the Word of God, and the Effects which the Truths of the Goſpel, and eſpecially the Doctrine of the Univerſal Judgment, produce, even upon

upon the Minds of the Wicked. But we likewiſe obſerve, how Sinners reſiſt that Word, and the Motions of their own Conſcience. This ſhould therefore be a warning to us, not to harden our Hearts, nor ever to delay our Converſion, when God cauſes us to hear his Voice, and when we feel our ſelves affected therewith. The naughtineſs of *Felix* appeared yet farther, by his leaving St. *Paul* Impriſoned; not that he thought him guilty, but becauſe he was Covetous, and hoped to extort Money from him, and out of Complaiſance to the *Jews*. Thus Avarice, and Reſpect for Men, are the cauſes of great Unjuſtice, and continual obſtacles to the attaining the Knowledge of the Truth.

CHAP. XXV.

I. THE *Jews* deſire *Feſtus*, who ſucceeded *Felix* in the Government of *Judea*, to ſend St. *Paul* from *Ceſarea*, where he was a Priſoner, to *Jeruſalem*, having formed a Deſign to Kill him on the Way; but *Feſtus* did not grant them their Requeſt, telling them, they might come to *Ceſarea*, which they did. Thereupon, St. *Paul* appealed to the Emperor, and *Feſtus* reſolved to ſend him to *Rome*. II. About this time King *Agrippa* arriving at *Ceſarea*, and having heard of St. *Paul*, was deſirous to ſee and hear him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may have obſerved in this Chapter; I. That the *Jews* having plotted to Aſſaſſinate St. *Paul*, God did not ſuffer them to execute that wicked and cruel Deſign: Here we continue to obſerve, the Protection with which

God ſhields his faithful Servants. II. St. *Luke* relates farther, how St. *Paul* being accuſed by the *Jews*, of ſeveral great Crimes before *Feſtus*, went on in maintaining his Innocence, and in requeſting that his Cauſe might be referred to the Emperor. This procedure of the Apoſtle ſhews that when we are unjuſtly accuſed, it is allowable to have recourſe to the Tribunals or Courts of Juſtice, and to make Uſe of all the lawful Means we can, for our Defence; but it muſt be likewiſe conſidered, that Providence did thus diſpoſe matters, not only that St. *Paul* might not fall into the Hands of the *Jews*, but alſo that he might thereby have an opportunity of going to *Rome*, and of Preaching the Goſpel in that great City, as our Lord had foretold he ſhould. III. The Behaviour of *Feſtus* towards St. *Paul*, ſhews that that Governour, though a Heathen, had more Integrity and Equity than the *Jews*, and even than the High Prieſts, and Magiſtrates of *Jeruſalem* themſelves. IV. *Laſtly*, 'tis to be obſerved, that King *Agrippa* coming at that time to *Ceſarea*, was deſirous to ſee and hear St. *Paul*, and that this was an Occaſion with which Providence furniſhed this Apoſtle, to ſpeak in the Preſence of that Prince, and a great number of People, of the firſt Rank; which turned to the Juſtification of St. *Paul*, and the Doctrine he Preached, as we ſhall ſee in the following Chapter.

CHAP. XXVI.

I. ST. *Paul* ſpeaking in the Preſence of King *Agrippa*, of *Bernice*, of the Governour *Feſtus*, and a great number of Officers, and People of Diſtinction, gives the Hiſtory of his Life, Converſion, and Manner of exerciſing

ercising his Ministry, down to that time. II. He was interrupted by *Festus*, who reproached him with Madness; and by King *Agrippa*, who was moved by his Discourse. III. Finally, this Prince, the Governour, and all that were present, acknowledged the Innocence of St. *Paul*; but it was resolved that he should be sent to *Rome*, because he had appealed to the Emperor.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. IN the Discourse St. *Paul* made before King *Agrippa*, to give an Account of the Conduct he had observed, both before and after his Conversion, we may discover a Character of Wisdom, of Moderation, and at the same time, of Ingenuity, Steadiness and Courage, which very plainly denote the Innocence and Zeal of this Apostle. The soft and respectful, but at the same time frank and sincere manner, in which he spoke upon this Occasion, should teach us to answer always as we are exhorted by St. *Peter*, with Meekness and Humility, to those who require an Account of our Faith, and of the hope which is in us, and never to conceal nor dissemble the Truth. II. We are to consider upon this Discourse, that though St. *Paul* persecuted the Church before his Conversion, he did it in Ignorance and Unbelief, but that otherwise, his Life was irreproachable; and that after the Lord had called him, he served him with great Zeal. What we are to learn from thence is, that Sins of Ignorance are more easily pardoned than others, and that we are likewise, more easily reclaimed from them; that God reveals Himself, sooner or later, to such as are of an upright Heart; and that, whenever he calls us, we ought to obey,

and follow that Call immediately. III. We ſee by the Judgment *Feſtus* made of *Paul*, in taking him for a mad-Man, that the trueſt and moſt ſerious Things ſeem Folly to the Worldly-minded; and the wiſe and reſpectful Anſwer which St. *Paul* returned to *Feſtus*, is a noble Inſtance of Moderation. IV. Upon what King *Agrippa* ſaid to St. *Paul*, that he had almoſt perſuaded him to be a Chriſtian, and upon the Anſwer St. *Paul* returned him, it may be obſerved, that that Prince, who profeſſed the *Jewiſh* Religion, was ſtruck with the Diſcourſe of the Apoſtle, and that he found in it a probability at leaſt, by which we may ſee the Force of Truth; but it likewiſe appears, that the Impreſſion was not to Salvation, ſince *Agrippa* took no care to be farther inſtructed therein. It is in vain to be but faintly affected with the Word of God, or to be a half Chriſtian, we muſt be ſo altogether, and with our whole Heart. *Laſtly*, We find that King *Agrippa* and *Feſtus* owned St. *Paul*'s Innocency. Thus it was, that what our Lord had foretold the Apoſtles was fulfilled; namely, that they ſhould be brought before Kings and Rulers, to bear witneſs of Him; but that He would aſſiſt them with his Spirit, and put into their Mouth what ſhould be neceſſary for them to ſpeak.

CHAP. XXVII.

THIS Chapter contains a Relation of the Voyage which St. *Paul* made by Sea from *Ceſarea* to *Rome*, where what is chiefly to be obſerved is, that he was in danger of Periſhing, the Ship in which he was having run a ground.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Hiſtory preſents us with four Remarks. I. The *firſt* relates the continual Dangers St. *Paul* underwent, ſince that after having eſcaped the Rage of the *Jews*, he had like to have been caſt away in his Voyage to *Rome*, and beſides, to be murder'd by the Soldiers. II. The *ſecond* is, that God, who had protected him till then, was pleaſed to deliver him from both thoſe Dangers. We ſee thereby, that nothing can hurt thoſe whom God favours with his Protection, and who ſerve him faithfully. The *third*, that God did not only ſave the Life of St. *Paul*, but for his ſake preſerved all thoſe that were in the Ship with him, ſo that when it ſplit, there was not one loſt. This wonderful Deliverance, which St. *Paul* foretold, was capable of convincing them, that this Apoſtle was a true Servant of God; and it is a Leſſon to us, that it is always a great Happineſs to be in the Company of good Men, and that upon their Account God often ſpares the reſt, granting them Deliverance, and ſhewing them great Favour. IV. It is to be obſerved in the laſt Place, that tho' God had aſſured St. *Paul* by an Angel, that none of thoſe who were 'embark'd with him ſhould periſh; yet that Apoſtle declared, that if the Mariners did not remain in the Veſſel, they could not be ſaved. The Promiſes which God makes us, ſhould not hinder us from uſing thoſe Means that Providence preſcribes, and which He himſelf has eſtabliſhed, wherefore our Reliance upon God ought never to be attended with Raſhneſs or Negligence.

CHAP. XXVIII.

WE ſee here, I. That St. *Paul* having been Shipwrack'd upon the Coaſt of the Iſle of *Maltha*, he ſtaid there three Months, and wrought ſundry Miracles. II. His departure from *Maltha*, and his arrival at *Rome*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Humanity which the Inhabitants of *Maltha* ſhew'd St. *Paul*, and thoſe which were ſhipwrack'd with him, ſhould teach Chriſtians to exerciſe Hoſpitality, and heartily to aſſiſt thoſe that are in Diſtreſs. The Judgment which the People of that Iſland paſſed upon St. *Paul*, when he was bit by a Viper, ſhews, that Men, and even the moſt barbarous People themſelves, have always thought that Divine Vengeance does not ſuffer Crimes to go unpuniſhed, which is a moſt certain Truth; however, the Example of St. *Paul* proves, that it would be judging raſhly, to imagine that all thoſe whom any Misfortune befals, are purſued by the Juſtice of God. The Opinion which the Inhabitants of *Maltha* conceived of St. *Paul*, taking him for a God, when they ſaw he was not hurt, muſt be look'd upon as an effect of the Ignorance of thoſe Idolatrous People; but this Miracle, as well as that of curing the Father in Law of *Publius*, and other diſtemper'd Perſons of that Iſland, obliges us to acknowledge the Accompliſhment of that Promiſe which Chriſt made his Apoſtles in the xvi*th* Chapter and 18*th* Verſe of the Goſpel of St. *Mark*: *They ſhall take up Serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it ſhall not hurt them; they ſhall lay Hands on the Sick, and they ſhall recover.* St. *Luke* tells us,

Laſtly,

Laſtly, That St. *Paul* being arrived at *Rome*, ſaw not only the Chriſtians that were in that great City, but likewiſe the *Jews*, whom he inform'd of the Reaſons that induced him to take a Voyage to *Rome*, and to appeal to the Emperor; that he ſpoke of their Nation, and of the *Jews* at *Jeruſalem*, with great Temper; that he afterwards endeavour'd to bring them to believe in *Jeſus Chriſt*; and finding at laſt that ſeveral among them continued in their Unbelief, he declar'd to them, that becauſe of their Obdurateneſs, he would preach the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*. This his Behaviour, full of Wiſdom and Charity, ſhews, that we ought to omit nothing that may edifie the World, or bring back thoſe who are prejudiced againſt the Truth; and that if then People will continue obſtinate, they are inexcuſable.

Thus ends the Hiſtory of St. *Luke*, and the Book of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*. It may be farther obſerved, that St. *Paul* remained a Priſoner at *Rome* two Years; that during that time, he writ ſeveral Epiſtles, which have been preſerved to this Age; that he was afterwards ſet at liberty, and made ſeveral Journeys; and that returning to *Rome* about eight Years after, he there ſuffer'd Martyrdom, being Beheaded in the Reign of *Nero*.

ROMANS.

ROMANS.

CHAP. I.

THE Epiſtle to the *Romans* was writ about the Fifty third Year of our Lord. 'Twas placed at the Head of the other Epiſtles, becauſe of the Importance of the Matters contained in it, and the Dignity of the City of *Rome*. The Deſign of this Epiſtle is to ſhew, that all Men, as well *Jews* as *Gentiles*, that would believe in *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſhould be ſaved; and that Circumciſion, and the Works of the Law of *Moſes*, gave no advantage to the *Jews*, any more than to the *Gentiles*. This is what we are taught in the Eleven firſt Chapters of this Epiſtle. In the five laſt, St. *Paul* exhorts the *Romans* to the principal Duties of the Chriſtian Life, and eſpecially to Charity, Forbearance, and Peace, foraſmuch as the Diviſions which prevailed at that time be-

between the *Jews* and the converted *Gentiles*, troubled the Peace of the Church.

In this firſt Chapter, St. *Paul* does two Things. I. He ſalutes the Believers at *Rome*, and teſtifies the Joy he felt in Hearing of their Faith, and the great Deſire he had to go and ſee them. II. He begins to ſhew, that all Men being Sinners, they could not be ſaved but by *Jeſus Chriſt*; and for that purpoſe he makes appear, that tho' God had revealed himſelf to the *Gentiles* by the Works of the Creation, they did not ſerve Him, but fell into Idolatry, and all Kinds of Diſorders.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE may obſerve from the very Beginning of this Epiſtle, the Love of St. *Paul* to the *Romans*, the Deſire he had to contribute towards their Edification, and the Zeal he was filled with, to make known the Goſpel in all Places, and all Kinds of Perſons, and even in the City of *Rome*. All Chriſtians, and particularly Miniſters of the Goſpel, ought to imitate St. *Paul* in this reſpect; to love tenderly the Church of Chriſt and the Faithful; to pray continually for them; to procure their Edification with all their Might, and never to be aſhamed of Truth or Godlineſs. II. We ſee, that although God manifeſted Himſelf to the *Gentiles* by the Works of the Creation, and Providence, they did not render Him the Glory, but abandoned themſelves to all ſort of Sins. We may thereby obſerve, how guilty we ſhould be, if, God having made known himſelf to us, not only by the Works of Nature, but by his Word, we did not ſerve Him as we ought. III. What the Apoſtle ſays in this

Chapter,

Chapter, with reſpect to the two principal Sins of the *Gentiles*, which were Idolatry, and the dreadful Diſorders in which they were involved with reſpect to Uncleanneſs, ſhews us in what Condition we ſhould be, if God had not enlighten'd us with the Light of the Goſpel, and in what horrid Actions Senſuality and Uncleanneſs may engage Mankind. IV. *Finally*, We ſee in the laſt Verſes of this Chapter, the Picture St. *Paul* draws of the Vices and Manners of the *Heathen*, by ſaying, that they were filled with Pollutions, Covetouſneſs, Injuſtice, and all kinds of Paſſions and Sins; and that although they knew that thoſe who did ſuch Things were worthy of Death, they did not forbear committing them. We muſt own to our ſhame, that this is the Picture of the Lives and Manners of a great Number of Chriſtians; but it likewiſe teaches us, that they who thus imitate the *Heathens* in their Diſorders, and who know much better than they the Law of God and his Will, muſt expect his ſevereſt Judgments.

CHAP. II.

I. ST. *Paul* having ſhewn in the foregoing Chapter, that the *Gentiles* were Sinners, proves in this, that the *Jews*, who condemned the *Gentiles*, were Sinners alſo; and by abuſing their Lights, and the Goodneſs of God, they would appear much more guilty before his Tribunal than the *Gentiles*, who knew no other Law but that of Nature and Conſcience. II. He repreſents, that it was in vain for them to boaſt of being *Jews*, and of having the Law of God, and Circumciſion, whilſt they did not obſerve that Law; and he declares to them, that all theſe external Advantages, which diſtinguiſhed

ſtinguiſhed them from the *Gentiles*, did not render them more acceptable to God.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Deſign of this Chapter in general is, to ſhew that the *Jews* were guilty before God, as much, and even more than the *Gentiles*, and conſequently, that they could not be juſtified nor ſaved but by *Jeſus Chriſt*. Beſides which, we may gather from this Chapter the following Inſtructions: I. That thoſe who condemn Sin in others, and do nevertheleſs commit the like, will be inexcuſable, and ſhall not eſcape the Judgment of God. II. That God uſes great Forbearance towards Sinners, in order to bring them to Repentance; and that thoſe who abuſe ſuch Forbearance, draw upon themſelves the moſt terrible Effects of his Wrath. III. That God will render one Day to Men according to their Works; that he will give everlaſting Life to thoſe who have perſevered in doing well; but that Affliction and Deſpair will be the Portion of the Wicked. IV. That at the Day of Judgment, Men will be judged according to the Degree of Knowledge which they ſhall have had; that the *Gentiles* will be judged by the Law of Nature; but that the Puniſhment of thoſe, who ſhall have ſinned againſt the Law that God has given them in his Word, will be much more rigorous; by which we may ſee, what Chriſtians are to expect, who ſin againſt the Light of the Goſpel. V. And Laſtly, we may ſee in this Chapter, that the *Jews* boaſted that they were more Knowing than the *Gentiles*, and valued themſelves upon having the Circumciſion; but that nevertheleſs St. *Paul* declared to them, that Circumciſion, and other Privileges which they enjoyed,

joyed, were of no uſe to them, and that they would be treated as *Gentiles* and Uncircumciſed. This teaches us, that we ought not to boaſt of our knowing the Will of God, of our being in his Covenant, and of having the external Tokens, unleſs we do his Will; that he is not a Chriſtian, who is only ſo outwardly; and that none ſhall be eſteemed Chriſtians, but ſuch as are ſo inwardly, and in the Heart, and who are praiſed and approved, not by Men, but by the Lord himſelf.

CHAP. III.

ST. *Paul* ſhews three Things in this Chapter. I. That the *Jews* had great Advantages over the *Gentiles*, but that if they did not believe in *Jeſus Chriſt*, that would not hinder God from being always true in his Promiſes, nor them from being puniſhed righteouſly; that for the reſt, tho' the Unbelief of the *Jews* ſerved to manifeſt the Righteouſneſs, Truth, and Goodneſs of God, yet they would nevertheleſs be wholly inexcuſable. II. St. *Paul* proves by ſeveral Texts of the Old Teſtament, that the *Jews* were guilty of the Violation of the Law of God, and he takes notice, that thoſe Texts did only relate to the *Jews*. III. He concludes from thence, that the *Jews* could not have been juſtified by the Law of *Moſes*, and that there was but one only Way of being juſtified for them, as well as for the *Gentiles*, which was Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*; and he ſays, that this Doctrine was ſo far from being oppoſite to the Law, that, on the contrary, it eſtabliſh'd it more ſtrongly.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Doctrine which St. *Paul* teaches throughout this Chapter, and which he deſigns to prove, is, that ſince the *Jews* were involved in Sin, and in the Guilt thereof, as well as the *Gentiles*, they could not pretend to be juſtified by the Law of *Moſes*, and that there was but one only Means of Juſtification for both, *viz.* Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*, who has made an Attonement for the Sins of all Mankind. Let us carefully retain this Doctrine, which is the Foundation and Sum of the whole Chriſtian Religion. There are moreover three particular Remarks to be made upon this Chapter. I. That as the Privileges which the *Jews* enjoyed, were of no benefit to them, by reaſon of their Unbelief; ſo likewiſe the Advantages which God has granted to us Chriſtians, will be uſeleſs to us, if we abuſe them, and will not ſecure us from his Judgment. II. That the Infidelity and Ingratitude of Men, do not leſſen the Righteouſneſs of God, when he puniſhes them; that ſuch Infidelity does even help to ſhew, that God is Righteous, Good, and True; but that nevertheleſs, we muſt not think that God cannot condemn Sinners with juſtice, becauſe Sin ſerves to manifeſt his Glory; for tho' that ſhould happen, it is only accidental; the Aim and Deſign of the Wicked tending by no means to advance that Glory. What the Apoſtle ſays upon this Occaſion, proves likewiſe, that we muſt never do Evil, under a Pretence that Good may follow. III. And *Laſtly*, it appears by the laſt Verſes of this Chapter, that the Intention of St. *Paul*, in what he here teaches, was not to aboliſh the Law, or to render it vain; nor ought we from thence to infer,

fer, that Chriſtians are allowed to continue in Sin; but, on the contrary, that the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith is, at the Bottom, the ſame with that of the Law and the Prophets; and that the ſaid Doctrine is ſo far from diſpenſing with the Duties of Holineſs, that it carries Men more ſtrongly towards them, as will be ſhewn by the Apoſtle in the following Chapters.

CHAP. IV.

THE Apoſtle proves in this Chapter, by the Example of the Patriarch *Abraham*, that Men are juſtified by Faith, and not by Circumciſion, nor by the Works of the Law of *Moſes*. Accordingly he obſerves, I. That *Abraham* himſelf was juſtified by his Faith, and that he received the Promiſes of God before he was circumciſed. II. He repreſents in the next Place, what was the Virtue and Efficacy of *Abraham*'s Faith, and exhorts the *Romans* to imitate the ſame.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. *Paul* teaches us in this Chapter, I. What Juſtification is, and how we may partake of it. He ſhews, that Juſtification, and the Happineſs of a Sinner, conſiſts in the Pardon of Sin, which God grants to Mankind out of his pure Mercy; and affirms, that this Favour is obtained by Faith in Chriſt, and not by Works of the Law of *Moſes*. This he proves clearly, by obſerving, that the Scripture ſays, that *Abraham* was juſtified by his Faith, and the Promiſes were made to his Poſterity long before he was Circumciſed. From whence it follows, that it was not the Circumciſion, but Faith, that

that render'd him acceptable to God; that therefore Circumciſion was not neceſſary to Salvation; and all thoſe who imitate the Faith of this Patriarch, will be accounted his Children and Poſterity, and juſtified as he was. II. But this is an invincible Proof, that 'tis impoſſible to be juſtified, and obtain Salvation, if our Faith be not like that of *Abraham*'s, and our Faith in God and his Promiſes be not efficacious and active, and does not induce us to expect every thing from Him, to hope firmly for what He has promiſed us, and obey Him even in the moſt difficult Matters, as did this holy Patriarch. This is a moſt important Doctrine, which we ought to comprehend well, and carefully remember, and which ſhould ſerve for a Rule to our Thoughts, and to our Actions, if we deſire to attain Salvation.

CHAP. V.

THIS Chapter conſiſts of three Parts. I. St. *Paul* deſcribes the Fruits of Juſtification, and the admirable Effects which Faith, and a Conviction of the Love of God, produceth in Believers. II. He repreſents the Greatneſs of that Love which God has manifeſted for Men, by giving his Son to die for them. III. He ſhews, that Chriſt alone is the Fountain of all theſe precious Advantages; in which View, he compares Chriſt with *Adam*, and ſhews, that if *Adam* had ſubjected all Men without exception to Sin and to Death, even thoſe that lived before *Moſes*, and to whom God had not given a poſitive and revealed Law, as He did to *Adam*; much more ought we to believe, that the Mercy of God ſhould extend it ſelf to all Mankind by *Jeſus Chriſt*; from whence

he concludes, that our Lord is the Author of Salvation, and of Life, to all ſuch as truly believe in Him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may obſerve by the Reading of this Chapter, I. The happy Condition of true Believers, ſince being juſtified by Faith, they have ſuch firm Perſuaſions, and ſuch ſweet and lively Sentiments of the Love of God, that they rejoice continually in the Expectation of the Glory of Heaven, even in the midſt of their greateſt Tribulations. II. We ought ſeriouſly to meditate upon what is here ſaid concerning the great Love that God has ſhewn to us ſinful Men, by delivering up his Son to die for us, and which He bears particularly to thoſe that are reconciled to Him, and believe the Goſpel ſincerely. This Conſideration affords us powerful Motives to ſhew our Gratitude towards God, and to confirm us more and more in his Love. III. The Compariſon St. *Paul* makes in this Chapter between *Adam* and *CHRIST*, tends to ſhew, that our Lord came to deliver Man from Sin and Death, to which they were all made liable by the Fall of *Adam*. This ought to make us look upon Chriſt, as Him in whom we find a Deliverance from all our Evils, and who is the Giver of Spiritual and Eternal Life to all ſuch as believe in Him. But it likewiſe appears from hence, that 'tis none but thoſe who have a Share in the Righteouſneſs and Life of Chriſt that can obtain Salvation; and that ſuch as don't receive Him with a true Faith, and who imitate *Adam* in his Diſobedience, do remain in Condemnation and in Death.

CHAP.

CHAP VI.

THE Deſign of St. *Paul* in this Chapter, is to ſhew, I. That the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith, which he has taught in the foregoing Chapters, does by no means authorize Chriſtians to live in Sin, but, on the contrary, does powerfully draw them from it. II. He ſhews in the ſame View, that we ought to be ſo far from Sinning, upon the pretext that we are no longer under the Law, but under Grace, that it is Grace which delivers us from the Slavery and Bondage of Sin, rendering us the Servants of God, and cauſing us to live in Righteouſneſs and Holineſs.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE ought ſeriouſly to meditate on the Doctrine St. *Paul* here teaches us; it amounts to this: That we ſhould not think, that becauſe we are delivered from our Sins by Chriſt, we are allowed to live in Sin; that, far from it, the the Baptiſm which we have received, and the Belief in Chriſt's Death and Reſurrection, oblige us in the ſtrongeſt manner to renounce Sin, and to lead a ſpiritual Life, in imitation of that of our Saviour; that it would be a thing highly unworthy of our Calling, and of the Condition of Chriſtians, if Sin ſhould reign in us, and if we ſhould ſuffer our ſelves to be carried away by the inordinate deſires of the Fleſh. But that we ought much rather to cleave to God, and employ our Bodies and Souls in his Service, and for his Glory. II. It is likewiſe of Importance carefully to attend to what St. *Paul* declares ſo ſtrongly and poſitively: That it would be an abuſe of the Doctrine of Grace,

and a great Affront to Chriſt and his Goſpel, to fancy that we may Sin without fear, upon pretext that we are no longer under the Law, but under Grace; that, on the contrary, the effect which Grace ought to produce, and the Deſign for which it is given to us, is to releaſe us from the ſhameful Bondage of Sin, and to make us ſubmit our ſelves to God and to Righteouſneſs, and cauſe us to bring forth the Fruits of Sanctification, to the end that we may obtain everlaſting Life. Theſe are Truths of very great Weight, let us carefully retain them, and often read this Sixth Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Romans* for that Purpoſe.

CHAP. VII.

THE Apoſtle having taught in the preceeding Chapters, that we muſt not think, that Chriſtians are allowed to live in Sin, on pretence that they are not under the Law, but under Grace; and, on the contrary, that it is for this very Reaſon, that Sin ought no longer to reign in them, he confirms the ſaid Doctrine in this Chapter, and ſhews, I. That we are not under the Law; but that as a Woman is at Liberty to Marry again, when her Husband is Dead, ſo Chriſtians may forſake the Law of *Moſes*, to cleave to that of Jeſus Chriſt. II. He ſhews next, that this Change was very advantageous to them, ſince they were thereby in a condition to produce the Fruits of Holineſs, and to ſerve God with a new Spirit. III. That he might the better explain his thoughts, he ſays, that the Law was Holy and Good, that it was not the cauſe of Sin; but that it had not the ſame Efficacy as the Goſpel, to ſanctifie Men, and to free them from Corruption. 'Tis in this View, that the Apoſtle repreſents by his own

own Perſon the State of a Man that lives under the Law, and who is in Subjection to Sin and Death; and he renders thanks to God, for having delivered him from that Condition, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS is a Chapter which ought to be well underſtood, and which muſt not be miſapplyed. The Deſign of St. *Paul*, is to teach thereby, that the Doctrine of Grace tends to ſanctifie Men, as he had eſtabliſhed it in the preceeding Chapter. Thus when he makes mention of *a carnal Man ſold to Sin*, in whom there is not any Good, who is a Slave to the Law of Sin, who does not do the good which he approves, but who commits the Evil he diſapproves; it muſt not be thought that he had a Mind thereby to deſcribe the Condition of a Regenerate Man, and of a Chriſtian that partakes of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt; for the Apoſtle ſays in this very Chapter, that Chriſtians are delivered from this State of Sin and of Condemnation, to bear Fruits for God, and ſerve him with a new Heart; and we are taught in the following Chapter, that Believers are no longer under the Bondage of the Fleſh and of Sin, but that they have been ſet free from them by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. But St. *Paul* deſigned to repreſent in his own Perſon, the Condition of a Man, who is under the Law, and who not having Faith and the Spirit of Chriſt, is a Slave to his Paſſions. The Doctrine of the Apoſtle amounts therefore to this: That the Goſpel does not allow us to live in Sin; that the Law had not the ſame efficacy as the Goſpel, to deliver Men from their Corruption, and to Sanctifie them; and therefore that the Doctrine of

Juſtification by Faith, very far from indulging Men in the Liberty of Sinning, tends to render them Holy, and to free them from the Slavery of their Paſſions. From whence it follows, that thoſe who are ſtill engaged in this Slavery, and in whom the Deſires of the Fleſh prevail, have not a true Faith.

CHAP. VIII. 1,——17.

I. ST. *Paul* ſhews that Chriſtians are no longer in Bondage to Condemnation and to Sin, like thoſe who are under the Law; and that they do not Govern themſelves by the Motions of the Fleſh, but by thoſe of the Spirit of God. II. He repreſents next to the *Romans*, that they were under an indiſpenſable Obligation to live not according to the Fleſh, but according to the Spirit, and to behave themſelves as the Children of God, and Heirs of his Kingdom.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Inſtructions which the firſt Part of this Chapter affords us are, I. That the Condition of true Believers is very happy, ſince there is no more Condemnation for them, and ſince they are delivered from Sin and Death, by the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by the Power of his Death, his Goſpel, and his Spirit. II. That the true and ſureſt token by which we may diſcover thoſe that belong to Chriſt is, that they don't live according to the Fleſh, but mortifie the Luſts thereof; that they ſet their Hearts upon ſpiritual Things, and follow the Motions of the Spirit of God, throughout their whole Behaviour. St. *Paul* tells us moſt expreſsly, that theſe are Duties abſolutely in-

indiſpenſable. He declares farther, that thoſe who have not the Spirit of Chriſt, do not belong to him in any Manner; that thoſe who live in Sin, and according to the Fleſh, cannot be acceptable to God, but involve themſelves in Death; whereas thoſe who labour to mortifie the Works of the Body, do partake of ſpiritual Life; that they will one Day attain, by means of the Reſurrection, to everlaſting Bliſs, and to the Poſſeſſion of the Inheritance which God reſerves for all his Children. Let us carefully remember theſe Inſtructions: Let us reflect on them continually, to the end, that they may inſpire us with a Behaviour, and with ſentiments worthy of the Title we bear of the Redeemed of Chriſt, of Children of God, and Heirs of his Kingdom.

CHAP. VIII. 18,——38.

THIS is the Deſign of what we are about to read. St. *Paul* has a mind to ſhew, that the Afflictions of Chriſtians do not hinder their Reconciliation with God. I. It is therefore in this View, he ſays that all the Creatures, that is, all the Faithful, and even the Apoſtles, and thoſe who firſt believed in Jeſus Chriſt, and received the Holy Ghoſt in an abundant Meaſure, underwent great Evils; but that however they waited with a firm Hope for the manifeſtation of the Glory of the Children of God. II. St. *Paul* adds, that God ſupported them by his Spirit, in the midſt of their ſoreſt Diſtreſſes, that He heard their Prayers, that their Afflictions were ſo far from being hurtful to them, that they contributed to their Happineſs, ſince God had decreed, that the Faithful ſhould arrive at Glory through Sufferings, after the Example of Jeſus Chriſt. III. From all this the Apoſtle

infers, that the Salvation of thoſe who love God, and who are Elected in Chriſt, is certain; and that God having given them his own Son, who died, and interceeds for them in Heaven, no Creature nor no Evil can harm them, nor hinder them from attaining everlaſting Happineſs.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we have read teacheth us, I. That the Troubles and Evils of this Life, are not to be compared with heavenly Glory, and that theſe Evils are ſo far from being Obſtacles to the Happineſs of God's Children, that they contribute towards it, and that in general, all things concur for Good to thoſe that love God. II. St. *Paul* ſhews us, that the Faithful, and thoſe that God loves moſt, do ſigh and groan, in expectation of this great Glory, which God has reſerved for them; but that nevertheleſs, God ſupports and comforts them in their Conflicts by his Spirit, and that He even makes Uſe of Afflictions to lead them to Glory, and make them conformable to Jeſus Chriſt. III. The Apoſtle tells us, that God will infallibly Glorifie all the Elect; that having given them his Son, He will therewith grant them every thing that is neceſſary; that the Death of Chriſt, his Entrance into Heaven, and his Interceſſion, ought to fill them with a firm Truſt in the midſt of their hardeſt Trials; and that there is no Creature, either in Heaven, or upon Earth, that can ſeparate them from the Love of God. This is a Doctrine full of great Comfort for the true Children of God, and very proper to ſupport them in their Afflictions, to fill them with Joy, Hope, and

and Cofidence, and to confirm them more and more in the Love of God and his Holineſs.

CHAP. IX.

I. ST. *Paul* declares in the beginning of this Chapter, that altho' he had taught, that the *Gentiles* would partake of the Grace of God as well as the *Jews*, yet he had ſuch a tender Concern for the latter, becauſe they were the People of God, as even to be willing to devote himſelf to Death, and to be uſed like the worſt of Men, if that might be of any Benefit to the *Jews*. II. He ſhews next, by the Example of *Iſaac*, whom God preferr'd to *Iſhmael*, who was alſo the Son of *Abraham*; and by the Example of *Jacob*, who was choſen before *Eſau*, although both had the ſame Father and Mother, and were Twins, that all thoſe who are deſcended from theſe Patriarchs, are not conſider'd as their Poſterity, nor comprehended in the Divine Covenant. III. St. *Paul* lays down farther, that God may admit into his Covenant, and chooſe for Salvation, thoſe whom he thinks fit; and that Men have no reaſon to complain, becauſe He is free in the Diſtribution of his Favours, and becauſe He does nothing but with Juſtice, and even with Goodneſs. IV. *Laſtly*, He concludes from what he has ſaid, that God might have called the *Gentiles* to Salvation; which he confirms by the Oracles of the Prophets, who had plainly foretold the Calling of the *Gentiles*, and the Rejection of the *Jews*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Abſtract and Subſtance of this Chapter, which treats of Predeſtination, is, that God, who is the Maſter of all Things, and who is perfectly juſt, and ſupreamly Good, may impart his Favours to whom He pleaſes, and that Men have no reaſon to complain thereof; that accordingly, He might have decreed Salvation to the *Gentiles* as well as to the *Jews*, and even juſtly reject the *Jews* becauſe of their Unbelief, as the Prophets expreſly foretold. This Doctrine obliges us to praiſe the Mercy of the Lord, who has vouchſafed to call us to his Covenant, us, who were originally *Gentiles*, and to acknowledge, that if we be choſen for Salvation, 'tis wholly owing to the Favour of God. We are to conſider in the next Place, that as all thoſe who deſcended from *Abraham* did not partake in the Promiſes of God, and that even the *Jews*, to whom theſe Promiſes were made, have been caſt off by reaſon of their Unbelief, notwithſtanding the Privileges of their Calling; ſo the Advantages of the Divine Covenant will become uſeleſs to us, if we do not make ſuitable Returns to the Goodneſs which God has ſhewn us, and if we exclude our ſelves from Salvation by our Ingratitude and Unbelief.

CHAP. X.

I. ST. *Paul* continues to treat of the Rejection of the *Jews*, and Calling of the *Gentiles*, and ſhews, that the *Jews* were rejected becauſe they placed their Righteouſneſs in the Law of *Moſes*, not obſerving that that Law lead them to *Jeſus Chriſt*. II. He ſhews next by the Words of *Moſes*, that Faith is a much more eaſie

eaſie Means of being juſtified before God, than the Law was, and that this Means of obtaining Salvation, conſiſts in believing heartily in *Jeſus Chriſt*, and in making a publick Profeſſion of his Doctrine. III. He adds, that this Salvation was offer'd to all Men, by the Preaching of the Goſpel; and proves from out of the Prophets, and particularly from *Moſes* and *Iſaiah*, that the *Gentiles* were to be called, and that the *Jews* ſhould be rejected, becauſe of their Hardneſs and Unbelief.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn from hence, I. That there is no other Means of Attaining to Salvation, but that which is offered to us in *Jeſus Chriſt*, and that thoſe who ſeek for other Means beſides, cannot be ſaved. II. That the Way which the Goſpel preſcribes for Juſtification, has nothing in it beyond our Power, or which is not even very eaſie, and that therefore we ſhould be inexcuſable if we don't lay hold of ſo precious an Advantage. III. St. *Paul* teaches us in this Chapter, that in order to be ſaved, we muſt believe in *Jeſus Chriſt* with our Heart, and confeſs Him with our Mouth; which ſhews, that a ſincere Faith, and a publick Profeſſion of the Goſpel, is abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation. IV. He teaches us moreover, that God was pleaſed to offer Salvation to all Mankind by the Goſpel; that Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and to the end that this Word may be heard, there muſt be Perſons ſent to Preach it. We may obſerve thereby the Neceſſity of Preaching the Goſpel, and the Value we ought to have for the Word of God, and the holy Miniſtry. V. And *Laſtly*, we ſee, that the Calling of the *Gentiles*, and the Unbelief of

of the *Jews*, was formally foretold. What is to be conſider'd thereupon is, on one Hand, that God had foreſeen and foretold long before what was to happen, as well to the *Jews*, as to the *Gentiles*; this proves, after an invincible manner, that there is a Providence which governs all Things, and that the Chriſtian Religion is of Divine Original; and on the other Hand, it is a Warning to us, not to imitate the Rebellion of the unbelieving *Jews*, leſt God ſhould ſay of us likewiſe: *All the Day long have I ſtretched out my Hands towards this Rebellious and Gainſaying People*; and leſt, that having render'd our ſelves unworthy of his Favour, we ſhould be entirely deprived thereof.

CHAP. XI.

ST. *Paul*, after having ſpoken of the Rejection of the *Jews*, asks whether God had wholly caſt off this People whom he had choſen; to which he himſelf anſwers two Things. I. The one is, that all the *Jews* were not rejected, ſince there were ſeveral of them who had believed in *Jeſus Chriſt*; juſt as in the Time of *Elijah*, there were ſeveral Worſhippers of the true God; but that the reſt of that Nation continued in Unbelief, according to the Oracles of the Prophets. II. The other thing that St. *Paul* anſwers is, that the *Jews* were not caſt off for ever, but only for a Time, and that their Fall had given occaſion for the Calling of the *Gentiles*, but that they would one Day be readmitted into the Covenant of God. III. After this, the Apoſtle exhorts the *Gentiles* to lay hold of the Goodneſs of God towards them, and of the Example of his Severity towards the *Jews*, leſt if they ſhould be puffed up with Pride, and fall into Un-

Unbelief, like the *Jews*, they were not alſo cut off. IV. And *Laſtly*, he plainly foretels the Converſion of the *Jews*, proving it from the Prophets, and concludes this Subject in Adoring the Wiſdom and Mercy of God, which appear in his Conduct towards both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and in what is to befal both of them in the latter Times.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE general Reflexion we are to make upon this Chapter is, that God had not entirely caſt off the *Jews*, ſince divers of them did believe the Goſpel, and ſince that Nation will be all of them converted one Day; that proves the Truth of God's Promiſes, and is a very ſtrong Confirmation of the Veracity of the Chriſtian Religion, and of the Divinity of the Holy Scripture. To this general Conſideration, we may add the four following particular Reflexions. I. That as in the Time of the Apoſtles, as well as in the Days of *Elijah*, there were Believers among the *Jews* and the *Iſraelites*, God has likewiſe always ſome Elect in the midſt of the greateſt Depravity. II. St. *Paul* ſhews us the Uſe we ſhould make of the Doctrine he has taught in this Epiſtle, concerning the Rejection of the *Jews*, and the Calling of the *Gentiles*; namely, that it ought to excite a Terror in us, and inſpire us with Sentiments of Humility and Gratitude, us, I ſay, who are the Poſterity of the *Heathens*, and induce us to embrace the Goodneſs of God, and to perſevere in Faith, leſt we likewiſe ſhould be cut off. III. We have here a moſt remarkable Prediction, from whence we learn, that the whole *Jewiſh* People ſhall one Day be converted, and that then the Fulneſs of the Nations ſhall come into the

the Church. We ought to expect with Faith and Joy, the Accompliſhment of this Prediction, to Pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God, and for the Converſion of the *Jews*, and in the mean Time to entertain a tender Compaſſion, and true Charity for them. IV. And, *Laſtly*, when we conſider this Procedure of God, as well towards the *Gentiles* as the *Jews*, and how he purpoſes to unite them one Day in his Church, it ſhould ſtir us up to adore the Ways of the Lord, to celebrate his Mercy and Wiſdom, and to ſay with St. *Paul*: *O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways paſt finding out! — For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: To whom be Glory for ever.* Amen.

CHAP. XII.

AFTER St. *Paul* had ſhewn that the Gentiles were called to Salvation by the great Mercy of God, he exhorts the *Romans*, in the remaining Part of this Epiſtle, to the Duties of a Chriſtian Life, and particularly, to Peace and Charity. In this Chapter he does three Things: I. He exhorts Believers to devote themſelves to the Service of God, and to renounce the World. II. He recommends to Chriſtians, and eſpecially to ſuch as had any Calling whatſoever in the Church, or Gifts, by which they were diſtinguiſhed from others, to exerciſe thoſe Callings, and to employ thoſe Gifts for publick Edification. III. He exhorts them above all to Charity, he ſhews the principal Duties of that Virtue, as well with reſpect to the Behaviour which Chriſtians ought to obſerve among themſelves, as in relation to the manner

manner in which they ſhould behave towards thoſe that Hate and Perſecute them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may learn in general, from this and the following Chapters, that St. *Paul*, after having treated concerning Juſtification, Rejection of the *Jews*, and Calling of the *Gentiles*, ſpeaks of the Duties of Chriſtian Morality; that the Deſign of the Goſpel is the Practice of Holineſs, and of good Works; and that it is particularly the Effect which the Doctrine of our Redemption ought to produce, as well as the Conſideration of the great Mercy that God has manifeſted to us in his Son. This Chapter does moreover furniſh us with three particular Leſſons. I. That the true Piety and the true Service which God requires of us, do conſiſt in devoting ourſelves entirely to him, in renouncing the World, in not imitating Worldly Men in their manner of Living, and in renewing our Spirit by an entire Submiſſion and Conformity to the Will of God. II. That being all Members of the Body of Chriſt, which is the Church, every one of us ought to apply the Gifts he has received to the Advantage of his Brethren; as they ought to do, more eſpecially, who are called to any Office in the Church, by diſcharging the ſame with Zeal and Integrity. III. That Charity is our chief Duty, and that it includes all the reſt, and that the principal Marks of Charity are the following: To love one another ſincerely; to render mutually all kinds of good Offices; to intereſt our ſelves in the Good or Evil that befals our Brethren; to Comfort and Aſſiſt thoſe that are in Affliction, and to live together in a Spirit of Peace, Union, and Humility. Charity does yet farther oblige Chriſtians

ans to love and bleſs thoſe who hate them, to endeavour to have Peace with all Men, to abſtain from Revenge, and to render Good for Evil. Theſe are the moſt eſſential Duties of the Religion we profeſs, let us therefore exhort one another to the Practice thereof.

CHAP. XIII.

ST. *Paul* ſpeaks in this Chapter, I. Of our Duty to the higher Powers. II. Of Love to our Neighbour, which is the Sum of the Law of God. III. He ſhews that Chriſtians ought to live in great Holineſs, and particularly, in Sobriety and Chaſtity, ſince God has delivered them from the Darkneſs of Ignorance, and enlightened them with the Light of the Goſpel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE three Parts of this Chapter afford us theſe three Inſtructions; I. That Kings, Princes, and Magiſtrates, are appointed by God; that it is from him they receive the Authority of Governing the People, and of Puniſhing thoſe who trouble the Peace of the Society; and that therefore, every one is bound in Conſcience to ſubmit himſelf to the higher Powers, to be faithful to them, and to render all that is due to them. II. That the Love of our Neighbour is as it were the Abridgment of the whole Law, which teaches us, that the true Way of fulfilling what the Law Commands, is to ſtudy chiefly the Duty of Charity, that is to ſay, to love our Neighbour ſincerely. III. St. *Paul* teaches us here, that ſince the Darkneſs of that Ignorance, in which Men formerly lived, is driven away by the Light of the Goſpel, and ſince we aſpire to Salvation, we ought to avoid Senſuality, Diſſoluteneſs,

luteneſs, Impurity, and all the deſires of the Fleſh, and to live in the Practice of great Chaſtity and Temperance. Let us obſerve theſe holy Maxims, and for our Encouragement, let us conſider the happy State in which God has placed us; let us always repreſent to our ſelves, that the time of our Salvation draws near, and that our chief Study ſhould be, to endeavour to partake thereof, through the Mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

CHAP. XIV.

TO underſtand this Chapter, we muſt know, that there were, in the time of St. *Paul*, certain Chriſtians, who having been *Jews*, and not being ſufficiently Inſtructed, ſcrupled the eating of certain Meats, and obſerved the Diſtinction of certain Days, after the *Jewiſh* manner. Wherefore St. *Paul* ſhews, I. How thoſe weak Perſons were to be treated. He ſays that they are to be born with, and that all Diſputes with them ought to be avoided, ſince they who had different ſentiments did follow each of 'em the dictates of their own Conſcience. II. He repreſents next, that Chriſtians only live unto the Lord, who alone has an entire Authority over them, no Body has a right to condemn others, every one being to give an Account of himſelf to God. He ſhews, III. That thoſe who were enlightened and inſtructed in the Chriſtian Liberty, ought not to abuſe that Liberty, nor offend weak People, who made a Scruple of eating certain Meats. IV. And *Laſtly*, he ſays, that the Spirit of Chriſtianity is a Spirit of Peace and Forbearance, that it was a great Sin to give Offence to any one, but however, that every one ought to abſtain from what

he thought forbidden, ſince all that we do againſt our Conſciences is ſinful.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Doctrine St. *Paul* teaches here amounts to this: That Chriſtians are bound to bear with each other; that thoſe who are moſt enlightened ought to have the greateſt Conſideration for ſuch as are weak, and leſs knowing than themſelves; that they ought not to deſpiſe them, nor do any thing that may grieve or offend them; that we ought to abſtain from indifferent and allowed things when we foreſee that they may be an occaſion of Scandal to others. Theſe are Maxims of Charity and Forbearance, from which we ought never to depart. We may conclude yet farther from hence, that Diſputes and Quarrels are extreamly prejudicial to the Edification of the Church, and therefore we ought to avoid 'em as much as poſſible. *Laſtly*, we ſhould take a particular Notice of what St. *Paul* lays down at the end of this Chapter, *viz.* That every one ſhould have a great Regard to his Conſcience, and that *whatever is not of Faith is Sin.* This teaches us, that thoſe who act againſt their own Conſcience, or even thoſe that do a Thing without being aſſured in their Conſcience that it is Lawful, are very guilty before God; and that in order to pleaſe the Lord, and enjoy Peace of Conſcience, we ought firſt to endeavour to ſatisfie it throughly, and to be well inſtructed in our Duty, and next to act conformably to what our Conſciences preſcribe to us.

CHAP. XV.

1. THE Apoſtle continues to exhort the *Romans* to Charity and Forbearance toward

wards ſuch as are weak in Faith, propoſing to them, for that purpoſe, the Example of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and he beſeeches God to inſpire them with theſe Sentiments of Peace and Charity. II. In this View he repreſents to them, that Chriſt was ſent to unite the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in his Church, as it had been foretold by the Prophets; by which he would convince them, that there ought to be no Diviſion among them. III. He ſpeaks next of his Miniſtry, and of the plentiful Fruits of his Preaching among the *Gentiles*, and in ſeveral Parts of the World; and he tells the *Romans*, that he intended to viſit them after he had made a Journey to *Jeruſalem*, on account of a Collection which was made for the Chriſtians in that City. IV. And Laſtly, he recommends himſelf to the Prayers of the *Romans*, praying likewiſe for them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn from this Chapter, I. That thoſe who are advanced in Knowledge and Piety, ought to behave with great Condeſcention and Charity to thoſe who are not come up to them, and thereby to imitate the Meekneſs and Goodneſs of our Lord. II. St. *Paul* ſhews the Deſign of this Epiſtle to the *Romans*, and the End of his Doctrine, by ſaying, that Chriſt came to ſave, not only the *Jews*, but the *Gentiles*, and to accompliſh by this means the Promiſes which God had made to their Forefathers by the Prophets. This is a Truth upon which we ſhould meditate, for the Strengthening our Faith, and for exciting us to gratitude towards God. III. We ought carefully to conſider what St. *Paul* ſays in this Chapter of his Travels and Labours; of the wonderful Succeſs of his Miniſtry, and of ſo many Churches which he had

founded in ſeveral Parts of the World, as well as of the Deſign he had to go to *Spain*, *Rome*, and other Places. All this ought to make us acknowledge the great Zeal of this Apoſtle, his perfect Charity, and above all, the Power of God, and the Divine Efficacy of the Goſpel. This is likewiſe an Example which the Miniſters of Chriſt ought to imitate as far as they are able, by labouring inceſſantly for the Eſtabliſhment of the Kingdom of God. IV. And *Laſtly*, the Zeal wherewith St. *Paul* recommends himſelf to the Prayers of the Chriſtians at *Rome* ſhews, that the Miniſters of Chriſt do greatly ſtand in need of being aſſiſted by the Prayers of the Church, and that one of the chief Duties of Chriſtians is, to pray for their ſpiritual Guides; as it is likewiſe the Duty of Paſtors to ſend up continual Prayers for their Flocks.

CHAP. XVI.

THIS Chapter contains, I. The Salutations St. *Paul* ſends to ſeveral Chriſtians of *Rome*. II. Exhortations to beware of thoſe who occaſion Troubles in the Church, teaching falſe Doctrine therein. III. The Wiſhes and Prayers which the Apoſtle makes in Favour of the *Romans*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THERE are two Things to be obſerved upon the Salutations contained in this Chapter: The *firſt* is, that the Goſpel had already made a conſiderable Progreſs at *Rome*, and that there were in that City a large Number of People, who made Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion. The *ſecond* relates to St. *Paul*'s Charity

rity and Love which he ſhewed to the Church of *Rome*, and particularly to the Faithful, who are here named. 'Tis thus that Chriſtians ought tenderly to love one another, to be ſtrictly united, and to pray for each other, tho' they be never ſo far diſtant; but thoſe Perſons are to be particularly cheriſhed, who diſtinguiſh themſelves by their Zeal and Piety. II. We learn next, that we ought to be upon our Guard againſt thoſe that teach Errors, and form Sects and Parties in the Church, and always to adhere to the pure Doctrine of the Goſpel, and to the Paſtors who preach it. III. And *Laſtly*, we ought to join our Thankſgivings to thoſe which the Apoſtle returns to God at the end of this Epiſtle, and to bleſs Him, *that is of Power to ſtabliſh you according to my Goſpel, and the Preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, (according to the Revelation of the Myſtery, which was kept ſecret ſince the World began, but now is made manifeſt, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the Commandment of the everlaſting God, made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith;) To that God only Wiſe, be Glory through Jeſus Chriſt for ever.* Amen.

I. *Corinthians.*

CHAP. I.

THIS Epiſtle was writ about the Year *Fifty one* of Chriſt. St. *Paul* gives ſeveral Inſtructions in it, as well concerning the Defects and Diſorders that were found in the Church of *Corinth*, as upon ſeveral important Articles of Religion. I. The Apoſtle begins the firſt Chapter by Salutations, by Thankſgiving, and Prayers. II. He reproves the *Corinthians* for the Diviſions that reigned among them, on account of the Miniſters who had preached the Goſpel to them. III. Speaking of himſelf, he ſays, that his Preaching was not attended with worldly Wiſdom and Eloquence; but that he preached after a very plain manner, and ſuitable to the Nature of the Goſpel, which is the Doctrine of the Croſs; God having thought fit, of his infinite Wiſdom, to ſave Mankind by a Means which appear'd Folly to worldly Perſons and Unbelievers, *viz.* by

by Chriſt crucified, and to call to Salvation, ſuch as were the leaſt conſiderable among Men.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE may learn from what St. *Paul* ſays, at the beginning of this Epiſtle, and the Wiſhes he makes for the *Corinthians*, that the Perfection of Chriſtians conſiſts in being enriched with all ſort of ſpiritual Gifts, ſo as to be found unblameable at the Coming of Chriſt. This is what we ought all to endeavour at, and what we ought to deſire for each other. II. The Reproofs which St. *Paul* addreſſes to the *Corinthians*, concerning the Parties that reigned among them, teach us, that there is nothing more hurtful than Schiſms and Diviſions, eſpecially thoſe that are built upon Matters of Religion; that Chriſtians ought never to call themſelves the Diſciples and Followers of any Miniſter or Teacher, whoever he be, but that they ought to adhere to *Jeſus Chriſt* only, and that the Miniſters of the Goſpel, far from giving occaſion to ſuch Diviſions, or of keeping them up, ought, after the Example of St. *Paul*, to hinder them with all their Might. III. It appears from this Chapter, that Miniſters ought to preach the Goſpel in great Simplicity, without aiming at the Wiſdom and Eloquence of the Age, which is nothing but Fooliſhneſs before God; the End of their Miniſtry being to preach Chriſt crucified. IV. And Laſtly, what St. *Paul* ſays here ſhews, that Chriſtians ought not to value Riches, Nobility, Power, and other Temporal Advantages; that the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and particularly the Croſs of Chriſt, is the Means that God has choſen, by an effect of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, to ſave

Men; wherefore we ought to cleave to *Jeſus Chriſt, who is made unto us Wiſdom, and Righteouſneſs, and Sanctification, and Redemption.*

CHAP. II.

THIS Chapter conſiſts of three Parts. St. *Paul* ſays, I. That he had preached the Goſpel with great Simplicity. II. That tho' his Doctrine was ſimple, yet it was very ſublime, and of a heavenly and divine Original. III. He concludes from thence, that this Doctrine being ſpiritual and heavenly, ought to be preach'd after the plaineſt Manner; and that if it were rejected by any upon that Account, it was becauſe ſuch Men were carnal, and adhered to earthly Things.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Miniſters of Chriſt, and all Chriſtians, ſhould learn from this Chapter, I. That the vain Eloquence, and the falſe Wiſdom of the World, ought not to be mingled with the preaching of the Goſpel. II. That the Doctrine of the Goſpel, tho' very ſimple, is the moſt ſublime, and the moſt perfect that ever was preached; that it infinitely ſurpaſſes all that the moſt learned Men could ever diſcover, ſince it teaches Things which *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit.* It follows from thence, that a divine Revelation was abſolutely neceſſary to our Salvation, to which we can attain by no other Way; that we ought to eſteem the Doctrine of the Goſpel beyond all Things, without ever departing from the Chriſtian Simplicity; and that this Doctrine does not want

to

to be ſupported by worldly Eloquence. III. We ought likewiſe to obſerve what St. *Paul* ſays farther, that *the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; for they are Fooliſhneſs unto him.* This teaches us, that carnal and earthly Men do not underſtand nor reliſh the Doctrine of *Jeſus Chriſt*; that that Doctrine being altogether Spiritual, cannot be received but by ſpiritual Men, and ſuch as are diſintangled from the Love of the World, and that ſuffer themſelves to be guided by the Spirit of God.

CHAP. III.

ST. *Paul* does four Things in this Chapter. I. He ſays, that he had taught the *Corinthians* nothing but the firſt Foundation of Chriſtianity, becauſe of their weak Condition, and he reproves them for continuing ſtill in the ſame, as appears from the Diviſions that reign among them on account of the Miniſters that preached the Goſpel to them. II. To put a ſtop to theſe Diviſions, he ſays, Miniſters are only Inſtruments in the Hand of God for the Salvation of Men, and that the whole Fruit of their Miniſtry proceeds from God alone. III. He adds in the ſame View, that he was the firſt who preached the Goſpel to the *Corinthians*, and that thoſe who came after him, ought to take care to preach none but true and uſeful Doctrines, which he calls by the Name of Gold, Silver, and precious Stones; but not vain and doubtful Doctrines, which he compares to Hay or Stubble, and ſays, that thoſe who preach ſuch kind of Doctrines would loſe the Fruits of their Labour, but that nevertheleſs, if they had preſerved the Fundamentals of Chriſtianity, they would be ſaved, as paſſing thro'

thro' the Fire, and by a particular Favour. IV. And Laſtly, St. *Paul* declares, that the Church being the Temple and Houſe of God, He will deſtroy thoſe that hinder its Edification, by teaching dangerous Doctrines, and by ſtirring up Diviſions, or in any other manner; and that the *Corinthians* ſhould not boaſt but in God alone, and not in thoſe who preached the Goſpel, ſince that the Apoſtles and other Miniſters were not appointed for their own Advantage, but for the Glory of God.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE four Parts of this Chapter furniſh us with four Inſtructions. I. That the Miniſters of *Jeſus Chriſt* ought to propoſe his Doctrine with Prudence, and accommodate their Diſcourſes to the Capacity of thoſe whom they teach. II. What St. *Paul* ſays, that he *planted, that Apollos watered, but that God gave the Increaſe*, ſhews, on the one Hand, that the Miniſtry of Paſtors and Teachers is very neceſſary, but that, on the other hand, the Efficacy of their Preaching muſt be aſcribed to God alone. III. The third Inſtruction is, That it is of great Importance that none but profitable and edifying Doctrines ſhould be taught in the Church; and that Miniſters ſhould be careful never to mingle with the eſſential Doctrines of Religion ſuch as be vain, uncertain, and uſeleſs, for fear of loſing thereby the Fruit of their Labour, and of hindering Edification. IV. St. *Paul* teaches us, that the Church being the Temple of God, every one ought to avoid with great Care all that may give Offence, and excite Troubles therein; that Miniſters are not appointed but only for the Health of Believ-

ers;

ers; and that both Miniſters and the reſt of the Chriſtians ought to refer the Miniſtry and all other things to this end, and to the Glory of God.

CHAP. IV.

ST. *Paul*'s Deſign here, is to remedy the Diviſions that prevailed in the Church of *Corinth*, on Account of the Miniſters who had Preached the Goſpel there. In which View he does three things. I. He ſays that the *Corinthians* ought to reſpect the Miniſters of the Lord; but that it was not for them to prefer ſome Miniſters to others; that although he diſcharges his Office with a good Conſcience, he did not think himſelf better than his Collegues; that all thoſe Gifts which Miniſters are endowed do proceed from God, and that it is God alone, and not Men, who is to judge of their Faithfulneſs. II. He ſpeaks of the Perſecutions, and other injurious Treatments to which he had been expoſed. III. He acquaints the *Corinthians* that he ſhould ſhortly viſit them, threatning to make uſe of that Power which God had given him, to put a Stop to the Diſorders in their Church, and to puniſh thoſe who are the Authors thereof.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE ſee here; I. What ſentiments Chriſtians ought to entertain of the true Miniſters of Chriſt; namely, to eſteem and reverence them, but yet without attributing to them, what belongs only to God, and without adhering to ſome, and deſpiſing others. II. St. *Paul* teaches us, that we ought not to value too highly the Opinion of Men, that it is God only who can judge of our Faithfulneſs, and that it

it is he who will make manifeſt hidden Things, and the thoughts of Mens Hearts, and who will render to every one his due Praiſes. III. That all the Gifts and Advantages we enjoy, proceed from God, that we have nothing but what we have received from Him, and that therefore, inſtead of valuing our ſelves upon them, the Glory thereof belongs to Him alone. IV. We ſee in the Deſcription which St. *Paul* gives of his Sufferings, that the faithful Servants of God, and even all true Chriſtians, may be expoſed to all kinds of Miſeries and Diſgraces; but the Example of this Apoſtle likewiſe ſhews, that ſuch as are thus Afflicted, far from thinking themſelves unhappy in this Condition, and from becoming uneaſie under it, or deſirous to revenge themſelves upon thoſe who are the Cauſe thereof, ought to bear all theſe Evils with Patience, and even with Joy, for the Edification of the Church, and to pray for thoſe who harm them, and after that, to be little concerned at the Hatred and Contempt of the World, provided they have the Approbation of God and their own Conſcience. The laſt Verſes of this Chapter ſhew, that St. *Paul* tenderly loved the *Corinthians*, that it was againſt his Will that he threatned them with Chaſtiſement, and that he had nothing elſe in View but their Edification. 'Tis likewiſe with ſuch a Spirit, that all the true Miniſters of the Lord are animated.

CHAP. V.

I. ST. *Paul* reproves the *Corinthians*, for ſuffering among them an inceſtuous Perſon, and he delivers him to Satan, that is to ſay, to be afflicted in his Body by Satan; which was a Puniſhment that the Apoſtles had the Power of Inflicting. II. He repreſents to them by the Parable

rable of Leaven, that it is very dangerous to ſuffer notorious Sinners in the Church, ſince they infect and corrupt others. III. and *Laſtly*, he orders the *Corinthians* to cut off from among them by Excommunication, thoſe that are Impure, and all ſuch as live in a ſcandalous Manner, and not to conſider them as Brethren, or Members of the Church.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter contains a very important Doctrine. We ſee thereby the neceſſity of Diſcipline in the Church, and eſpecially of that Part of Diſcipline, which conſiſts in Excommunication. St. *Paul* teaches us, that when Perſons, who ſtyle themſelves Chriſtians, fall into Sins, which diſhonour the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, the whole Church ought to mourn for it, and ſhould not ſuffer thoſe Perſons to remain in her Communion; but that they ought to be cut off by Excommunication, and that, for the Health of Sinners themſelves, for the Honour of the Chriſtian Religion, and for fear that their evil Example might corrupt the reſt of the Members of the Church. St. *Paul* declares after the moſt poſitive manner, that we ought not to acknowledge for Brethren, nor even for Chriſtians, unclean Perſons, Unjuſt, Slanderers, Drunkards, or other ſcandalous Sinners, nor have any familiar Dealings with them. This is the Law of Jeſus Chriſt: This is what the Holy Apoſtles have commanded in his Name, and what the firſt Chriſtians practiſed; on which Account, we are forced to own, that the Church is not now Governed as it ought to be, ſince this kind of Excommunication is hardly exerciſed any where; nevertheleſs, the Duty of all true Chriſtians is, to avoid as far as poſſible,

all

all Correſpondence with wicked Men, and to diſtinguiſh themſelves from them, by a Holy and Exemplary Life.

CHAP. VI.

I. THE Apoſtle reproves the *Corinthians* for having recourſe to heathen Judges and Magiſtrates, to determine their Law-Suits. II. He adds upon this Occaſion, that thoſe who wrong their Neighbour, ſhall not enter into Heaven, any more than thoſe who were guilty of Impurity, and other Crimes which he here mentions. III. He exhorts the *Corinthians* with great Force, and by ſeveral reaſons, to avoid Impurity, as a Vice that was infamous, and altogether unworthy of Chriſtians.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Reflexions we may make upon this Chapter are the three following: I. That Chriſtians being Brethren, ought to avoid Law-Suits as much as poſſible; that they ſhould endeavour to make an end of their differences amicably; and that if they be forced to have recourſe to Judges, they ſhould do it in a Spirit of Juſtice and Equity, of Meekneſs and Moderation, and without giving any Scandal. II. That thoſe who wrong others, whether by unjuſt Law-Suits, or in any other manner, ſhall no more partake of the Kingdom of God, than the Impure and other ſcandalous Sinners; that Men lived in thoſe Crimes while they were Heathens, but that God engaged them to renounce the ſame, by calling them to the Chriſtian Religion, and by cleanſing them from their Sins, by the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, and by the Grace of the Holy Ghoſt. III. The *Third* Inſtruction relates to Impu-

Impurity. St. *Paul* ſhews in this Chapter, that this Sin ſeparates thoſe who commit it from the Communion of Chriſt, and cauſes that they be no longer his Members; that unclean Perſons diſhonour their own Body, which ought to be the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and thereby deprive themſelves of that holy Spirit. *Laſtly*, he declares, that ſince we are redeemed by the precious Blood of *Jeſus Chriſt*, our Bodies belong to God as well as our Souls; that therefore we are no longer our own, but are bound to glorifie God both with our Body and Soul. All theſe Conſiderations are extreamly preſſing; and ſince St. *Paul* alledges ſo many Reaſons to diſſuade Chriſtians from Impurity, we ought to acknowledge that this Sin is very great, to have it in Abhorrence, and to endeavour to preſerve great Purity both of Body and Soul, if we deſire that God ſhould own us for the Diſciples and redeemed of his Son.

CHAP. VII. 1,——24.

ST. *Paul* anſwers in this Chapter to ſeveral Queſtions which the *Corinthians* had propoſed about Marriage. He gives an account, I. Of the Inſtitution and Duties thereof. II. He ſays it is not good to Marry; but that however Chriſtians are at liberty to do it. III. He exhorts married Perſons not to ſeparate, and ſhews what was the Duty in this reſpect of ſuch Men and Women as were married to *Heathens*. IV. And *Laſtly*, he orders all Chriſtians to continue in the ſeveral Callings and Conditions in which Providence had placed them, and to live according to the Will of God.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

FROM what has been read, we may learn, I. That Marriage is a holy and honourable State, but that the Duty of Chriſtians is, to lead that Life in Union and Concord, in Purity and Chaſtity, as alſo in Piety, by ſetting apart Seaſons for Faſting and Prayer. II. That altho' the Conditions of thoſe who do not marry be the more happy, yet every Man is left to his liberty; that each one ought therefore to regulate his Conduct in that Matter, according as he finds himſelf called to live in a married or ſingle State. But that thoſe who are not married, are bound to live in great Purity and Continency. III. That Husbands and Wives ought not to ſeparate from each other; but, on the contrary, to live together, and to edifie themſelves mutually, by living in Peace, Godlineſs, and Purity. IV. That God having thought fit that there ſhould be different States and Conditions in the World, each one ought to continue in the Calling in which he finds himſelf, provided it be a lawful one, and faithfully diſcharge all the Duties in which ſuch Calling engages him, without endeavouring to leave it by ſinful Methods.

CHAP. VII. 25,——40.

THE Apoſtle, after having diſcourſed concerning married Perſons, ſpeaks of thoſe that are ſingle, and of Virgins, and what he ſays of them amounts to this: That the Condition of theſe Perſons was the Happieſt, eſpecially at that Juncture; which was in Times of Perſecution; but that however they may marry if they will. He pronounces the ſame of Widows.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Doctrine of St. *Paul* in this Chapter, is in general; that Perſons who don't Marry have ſeveral Advantages over others, provided they live in Chaſtity, ſince they may ſerve God with leſs Diſtraction in ſuch a State, and that in the Times of Perſecution they are more free, and better able to undergo it; but that whether People Marry, or whether they live in Celebacy, they ought to be Pure and Chaſt both in Body and Mind. Another and moſt wholſome Inſtruction which St. *Paul* here gives us, and which is adapted to all Seaſons and all kinds of Perſons is, that our Lives are ſhort, that our Condition in this World is very uncertain, and all Things here below are fleeting; for which reaſon we ought not to ſet our Heart upon them: but that *it remaineth, that both they that have Wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as tho' they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not; and they that uſe this World, as not abuſing it: for the Faſhion of this World paſſeth away.*

CHAP. VIII.

ST. *Paul* examines the Queſtion propoſed to him by the *Corinthians*, whether it was lawful for Chriſtians to eat of Things that had been offer'd to Idols. Whereupon he anſwers, I. That Chriſtians who had been rightly Inſtructed, knew well enough that it was allowable to eat of all kind of Food, and that Idols were Vanity and Nothing, ſince there was but one God only. Nevertheleſs he adds, II. That that Liberty ought not to be abuſed, for fear of

giving Offence to weak Perſons, and ſuch as were not ſufficiently Inſtructed nor confirmed in the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THOUGH we have no need to be informed at this Time concerning the Uſe of Things ſacrificed to Idols, ſince the Idolatry of the Heathens is aboliſhed from amongſt us, and ſince we all know that there is but one God only, and that Idols are nothing; yet that does not hinder, but that the Doctrine which St. *Paul* lays down in this Chapter, may be of general Uſe. He teaches us here, that all Chriſtians, and eſpecially thoſe among 'em who are beſt Inſtructed, ſhould carefully avoid giving ſcandal to their Neighbour; and that we may offend our Neighbour, not only by doing Criminal things, but likewiſe ſuch as are Lawful, for which Reaſon we ought to behave with great Circuſpection and Prudence in the Uſe of thoſe things. He ſhews us likewiſe, that it is a great Sin to give ſcandal to any one, ſince that thereby we may be the Occaſion of our Neighbour's Deſtruction, and may be extreamly guilty even againſt Chriſt Himſelf. Theſe are very weighty Conſiderations, and ought to be continually remembred in the whole Courſe of our Lives.

CHAP. IX.

ST. *Paul*'s Deſign in this Chapter is to confirm, by his Example, what he had taught in the foregoing; namely, that when the Edification of our Neighbour is concerned, we ought to abſtain from things that are permitted. In this View he does three Things. I. He ſays that he

he had a right, as an Apoſtle, to expect a Stipend for his Support, and to lead about with him a Wife, that ſhould likewiſe be aſſiſted at the expence of the Church. II. He adds, that he had not made Uſe of this Right, but ſhewn great Condeſcention towards all ſorts of People, accommodating himſelf to the Scruples of the Weak, for fear of creating in them an Averſion to the Goſpel. III. He exhorts the *Corinthians* to imitate him therein, and to renounce the Uſe of Lawful things, when the Edification of their Neighbour and the Salvation of their own Souls required it. And he propoſes to them for that Purpoſe, the Example of thoſe who combated formerly in the Publick or *Olympick* Games of *Greece*, and who upon that Account lived in great Abſtemiouſneſs.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE general Deſign of this Chapter is to teach us, that we muſt not always do whatever is allowable, and what we may have a Right to do; but that we ought to abſtain from ſuch a Right when the Glory of God and the Salvation of our Neighbour require it; and that it is the Duty of Chriſtians to accommodate themſelves as much as poſſible to all ſorts of Perſons, and particularly, to keep great Meaſures with the Weak, in order to bring them to the Faith. Beſides this general Doctrine, which is of ſingular Uſe, we have here ſome particular Inſtructions, the chief of which are the Three following: I. That Chriſtians are obliged, by the divine Law, and by the Commands of Jeſus Chriſt, to provide for the Maintenance and Support of Paſtors and their Families. II. That Miniſters, in imitation of St. *Paul*, ought to behave with much Prudence

and Charity, to adapt themſelves to the weakneſs of Men, to have no Conſideration for their own private Intereſt, and to endeavour by all Ways and Means to gain to Chriſt as many Souls as they can. III. That we cannot diſcharge theſe Duties of Chriſtianity, unleſs we live in great Temperance; that to that end we muſt mortifie our Bodies, reduce them to Subjection, Abſtinence, and Labour; avoid Idleneſs, Luxury, and every thing that indulges too much the Fleſh, and purſue ſuch a kind of Life as is conformable to the Precepts of the Goſpel, and the Example of Chriſt and his Apoſtles; to the end that by thoſe Means we may obtain the glorious Reward which is reſerved for all thoſe that ſhall carefully diſcharge theſe Duties.

CHAP. X.

THE Apoſtle continuing the Matter he had treated of, in the two preceeding Chapters, touching the Uſe of Meats ſacrificed to Idols, repreſents here to the *Corinthians*, I. That though the ancient *Iſraelites* were the People of God, and that they enjoyed the like Advantages which the Chriſtians now do, yet they had been drawn away to Idolatry and Impurity, by aſſiſting at the Feaſts of Idolaters; and that by their Senſuality and frequent Murmurings they had brought upon themſelves the Judgments of God. He ſays that Chriſtians ought to make a good Uſe of theſe Examples, and beware of falling into Idolatry. II. He adds, in the ſame View, that the Uſe of the Holy Supper, whereby Chriſtians partake of the Sacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt, did not allow them to aſſiſt at the Entertainments which the *Pagans* made in Honour of their Idols, nor to eat of the Meats that had been ſacrificed to falſe Gods, ſince that would

be partaking of Idolatry, and expoſing themſelves to divine Vengeance. III. He concludes that Chriſtians might eat of all kind of Meats in private Houſes, but if they were told that ſuch Meats had been ſacrificed to Idols, they ought to forbear, not becauſe it was ſinful to eat thereof, but to avoid giving Scandal; and he exhorts the *Corinthians* to regard in all Things the Glory of God, and the Edification of their Neighbours.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT has been ſaid in this Chapter, obliges us to conſider, I. That if the Ancient *Jews* were puniſhed for having abuſed the Favours God had granted them, we ſhall be puniſhed much more ſeverely, if we abuſe thoſe that we have received, ſince they are far more excellent. II. The Example of the *Iſraelites*, who, by partaking of the Feaſts of Idolaters, fell into Impurity and Idolatry, and the Vengeance thatGod took upon them for the ſame, is a warning to us, as St. *Paul* ſays, to avoid the Occaſions of Sin, and particularly to put away from us all Senſuality and Uncleanneſs, leaſt that if we ſuffer our ſelves to be carried away by them, we be expoſed to the Judgments of God. III. We ought to conſider, that if St. *Paul* aſſerts, that Chriſtians might not partake of the Table of the Lord, and at the ſame Time eat of that which was ſacrificed to Idols, the Participation of the Holy Supper is not leſs incompatible with a carnal and corrupt Life; and that the Publick and Solemn Commemoration which we make in this Sacrament of the Sacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt, does indiſpenſably oblige us to lead a pure and holy Life. IV. Let us carefully retain this general Doctrine, that in

all our Actions, even in thoſe that are Indifferent and Lawful, we ought always to have in View, the Glory of God, and the Edification of our Neighbour, as St. *Paul* directs by the Rule which he gives us: *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.*

CHAP. XI.

THIS Chapter, in which St. *Paul* reproves the *Corinthians* for the Diſorders they committed at their Religious Meetings, conſiſts of two Parts. I. In the *Firſt*, he preſcribes the manner in which Women ſhould behave in the Church; and what he ſays, is founded upon the Rules of Decency, which require that Women ſhould not appear in Publick without being veiled, and their Head covered, which was likewiſe the Cuſtom of the *Jews*, and other People in that Age. II. In the *Second* Part, he reproves the *Corinthians* for the Irreverence and Diſorder in which they celebrated the Holy Supper, at the end of their Charity-Feaſts; and to induce them to correct thoſe abuſes, he relates the Inſtitution of this Sacrament; he ſhews the Uſe that ſhould be made of it, and tells the *Corinthians*, that it was for the Puniſhment of the Indevotion with which they partook of it, that ſeveral of 'em were afflicted with Sickneſſes, and ſome even with Death it ſelf.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Warnings St. *Paul* gave the *Corinthians* upon what paſſed in their Aſſemblies, inſtruct us in general, that Order, Gravity and Decency, ought to be obſerved in the Congregations of the Church, and particularly, that Women

men ought to appear there with reſpect, and after ſuch a Manner as may denote the Submiſſion, Humility, and Modeſty, belonging to their Sex. In the next Place, we ſhould make the moſt ſerious Reflexions upon what St. *Paul* ſays here, concerning the Holy Supper and its Uſe: It appears by this Chapter, I. That this Sacrament is a ſolemn Inſtitution of our Bleſſed Redeemer, and that in the Time of St. *Paul*, it was celebrated in all the Chriſtian Churches. II. That the end for which Chriſt appointed the Holy Supper, was to declare the Remembrance of his Death, until his coming again at the laſt Day. III. That we ought to celebrate this Sacrament with very great Reverence, that we ſhould try our ſelves before we reſort to it, that thoſe who do not ſo, and who partake unworthily thereof, are guilty of a very criminal Contempt of Chriſt Himſelf, and eat and drink their own Condemnation. IV. And *Laſtly*, it is to be obſerved, that God puniſhed the Abuſe of the Holy Supper, in the Time of the Apoſtle, by Sickneſs and Death. From whence we may conclude, that this Sacrament is a very Holy Inſtitution, and that thoſe who profane it, either by Raſhneſs or Hypocriſy, may expect a moſt ſevere Condemnation.

CHAP. XII.

THE Deſign of St. *Paul* in this Chapter, is to Inſtruct the *Corinthians* about the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, and the Uſe that is to be made thereof, and to prevent Diviſions from ariſing in the Church upon that Occaſion; for which Purpoſe he does two things. I. He ſays, that all thoſe who had renounced Idolatry, and believed in Jeſus Chriſt, were partakers of the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. He obſerves, that

God granted to the Miniſters of the Church, and even to ſeveral of the Believers of that time, divers extraordinary Gifts, ſuch as that of ſpeaking all kind of Languages, of healing the Sick, and the like; that all theſe Gifts proceeded from the ſame Author, but that they were different, and that all thoſe who had received the Spirit of God, did not poſſeſs the ſame Gifts, nor the ſame Meaſure thereof. II. He ſhews that theſe Gifts proceeding all from the ſame Spirit, and the Believers compoſing altogether but one only Body, they ought to be employed to the common Advantage and Edification of the Church; 'tis in this View that St. *Paul* inſtances in the Compariſon of a Humane Body; and obſerves, that although all the Members have not the ſame Functions, nor the ſame Dignity, they are notwithſtanding all neceſſary, and do all contribute to the good of the Body. By this St. *Paul* would convince the *Corinthians*, that inſtead of Quarrelling about the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, they ought to uſe them for the Edification of the Church.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THAT we may benefit by this Reading, it muſt be obſerved, I. That the miraculous Gifts which formerly obtained in the Church, were an undeniable Proof of the Divinity of the Chriſtian Religion, and a very efficacious Means to confirm Chriſtians in the Faith, and to bring into it both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. II. Though theſe extraordinary Gifts are not to be met with now, yet we ſhould apply the Doctrine contained in this Chapter, to the ordinary Gifts of the Spirit of God, and learn thereby, that all ſpiritual Gifts and Graces proceed from the Holy Ghoſt. That God beſtows them upon Men in

in different Degrees; but as we do only compoſe one Body altogether, we ought to appropriate all the Gifts which we have received to one and the ſame End, which is, to the common Edification and Benefit of the Church, and to live in perfect Union, and Harmony among our ſelves, each of us being contented with that Meaſure of Grace, which God has been pleaſed to diſtribute to us, and poſſeſſing the ſame with Humility. *Laſtly*, St. *Paul* ſhews, towards the End of this Chapter, that there are more excellent and more wholeſome Gifts than the Miraculous ones beforementioned, namely, thoſe of true Faith and Charity, of which he treats in the following Chapter; theſe are therefore the Gifts which we ought chiefly to ſeek after.

CHAP. XIII.

I. ST. *Paul*, after having ſpoken of the miraculous and ſupernatural Gifts, teaches, that as great and excellent as they are, they are of no value without Charity. II. He afterwards deſcribes the Nature and Characters of this Virtue, he proves that it baniſhes Diviſions, Jealouſies, and Pride; and this he ſays, becauſe thoſe Vices reigned among the *Corinthians*. III. And *Laſtly*, he ſhews that Charity is the chief of all Virtues, were it upon no other Conſideration, than that other Virtues and miraculous Gifts will be aboliſhed, whereas Charity will have no end.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter, which treats of Charity, ought to be continually meditated by all Chriſtians; St. *Paul* here ſhews the Nature and Excellency of this Virtue. He proves the Excellency

cellency of it on theſe two Accounts: I. That without Charity, that is to ſay, without a ſincere Love for our Neighbour, all other Gifts are unprofitable, and we are nothing in the Sight of God. II. That this is a Virtue which will laſt for ever, and which will render us perfect in Heaven, as it does upon Earth. The Apoſtle inſtructs us next in the Nature of Charity. He ſays, that thoſe Perſons who are endowed with this Virtue, are neither envious nor ſuſpicious, nor Self-intereſted, nor Peeviſh, nor Quarrelſome; but that they are Patient, Meek, Peaceable; that they judge charitably, that they do Good, that they bear all Things. Let us carefully attend to theſe Characters, and labour to gain them; and ſince Charity is the great and principal Virtue of Chriſtianity, and the Band of all other Virtues, let us chiefly apply our ſelves to the Practice thereof.

CHAP. XIV.

I. ST. *Paul* continues to ſpeak of miraculous Gifts, and particularly of the Gift of ſpeaking divers Languages; and he ſays, that although this be an excellent Gift, yet that of Prophecy, that is to ſay, the Gift of explaining Scripture, was much more beneficial for the Edification of the Church. Upon this occaſion he ſhews why, and for what purpoſe, God granted in thoſe Times the Gift of Languages to certain Perſons. II. He orders next, that thoſe who ſpoke thoſe Languages, or who had any Revelation, ſhould proceed in Order, and after one another, and that there ſhould always be ſomebody to interpret what they ſaid; he directs farther, that Women ſhould keep ſilence in the Church, and that all ſhould be done with Decency and Order.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THO' the Gift of ſpeaking divers Languages, has ceaſed in the Church, and though there be no Revelations at preſent, as there was in the Time of the Apoſtles, yet we may gather from this Chapter the following important Inſtructions. I. That theſe extraordinary Gifts were, as St. *Paul* ſays, a ſtrong Proof of the Truth of the Goſpel. II. That as excellent as ſuch Gifts were, they were not advantageous or wholſome, unleſs applied to the Inſtruction and Edification of the whole Church, which ought always to be the great End of Religion. III. That it is of the utmoſt Moment to communicate to the People, a clear Knowledge of the Truths which God has revealed to us, and for that purpoſe, to explain the Scriptures familiarly and intelligibly; that accordingly, the Reading of the Bible, Exhortations, Prayers, Pſalmody, Celebration of Divine Service, and in general, every thing that is done in the Church, ought to be performed in a Language which the common People underſtand, and in a plain and ſimple manner, and accommodated to the Capacity of every Body. IV. And *Laſtly*, we ought carefully to attend to the Rule that St. *Paul* lays down throughout this whole Chapter, and particularly in the laſt Verſe: God is not a God of Confuſion, but a God of Order and Peace, and that all Things ought to be done in the Church with Decency, Order, and Gravity.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV. 1,——34.

ST. *Paul* proves in this Chapter the Reſurrection of the Dead, againſt certain Perſons who denied the ſame. For which purpoſe he lays down, I. That our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* is riſen from the Dead, which he proves by the Teſtimony of the Apoſtles, and ſeveral other Perſons. II. He infers from thence, that the Dead ſhall riſe again, which he illuſtrates and confirms by ſeveral Arguments.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter is an excellent Diſcourſe, in which the Doctrine of the Reſurrection is fully explained. St. *Paul* teaches here, I. That the whole Chriſtian Religion is founded upon the Reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and that the ſaid Reſurrection is a certain and undoubted Fact, atteſted by the Apoſtles themſelves, whoſe Evidence cannot be queſtioned. II. St. *Paul* ſhews, that the Dead will infallibly riſe again, and the Proofs alledged by him are the following: That if the Dead were not raiſed, Chriſt would not have riſen, and our Faith would have been vain; that the Faithful, who have died in the Lord, would have periſhed for ever; that Chriſtians would have been the moſt Miſerable of all Men; that the Evil which *Adam* has brought upon us, by ſubjecting us to Death, could not have been otherwiſe attoned for. III. He ſays farther, that Chriſt would not fully reign over all Things, if by raiſing us, He did not deſtroy Death, which is our laſt Enemy; and finally, that if there was no ſuch Thing as the Reſurrection, it would be a great

Folly

Folly for Chriſtians to expoſe themſelves to all the Evils which they underwent. Let us deeply engrave in our Hearts, a Doctrine ſo comfortable as this is; and let us return Thanks to God for having eſtabliſh'd the Hopes of our Reſurrection upon ſuch ſure Foundations. Let us take heed that the Words and Examples of prophane Perſons do not ſtagger our Faith, and endeavour to confirm our ſelves therein more and more; but let us likewiſe remember, that this Doctrine ſhould provoke us to live in Piety, and that it is only by a holy Life that we can partake of the Reſurrection of the Juſt.

CHAP. XV. 35,——58.

ST. *Paul*, after having proved the Reſurrection of the Dead, ſhews, I. That although our Bodies are deſtroyed by Death, they will be reſtored to Life, and that then they ſhall be no longer corruptible, weak, and mortal, as they now are; which he explains by the Compariſon of Grain that is ſown, and by ſome other Types. II. He ſpeaks next, of what will happen to thoſe who ſhall be Living at the Time of the Reſurrection, or laſt Day. And, III. concludes, by deſcribing thoſe Sentiments of Joy and Piety wherewith the Belief of the Reſurrection ought to inſpire all true Chriſtians.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Deſign of what we have read is, I. To teach us, that although Death deſtroys our Bodies, and reduces them to Duſt,

Duſt, they will nevertheleſs be raiſed again by an effect of the Omnipotence of our Lord; and that the Bodies thus raiſed, will be incorruptible and glorious, inſomuch, that we ſhall all be then like *Jeſus Chriſt*. II. Beſides this, we ſee that thoſe who ſhall live to the End of the World will be changed in an inſtant, and that accordingly all the Faithful will become immortal. III. The Expectation of this great Glory, for which we are reſerved, ought to fill us with Hope and Joy; to diſſipate entirely the Terrors of Death, and to make us ſay with St. *Paul*: *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the Victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* But the Hope of this Reſurrection of our Bodies, does likewiſe oblige us to preſerve them in great Purity, and to practiſe continually all the Duties of Chriſtianity; 'tis what St. *Paul* exhorts us to by theſe Words, which ſhew the Uſe of this Doctrine: *Be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord; foraſmuch as ye know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

CHAP. XVI.

I. THE Apoſtle exhorts the *Corinthians* to contribute to a Collection that was made in Favour of the Churches of *Judea*. II. He promiſes to ſee them in a little Time, recommending to them *Timothy*, and ſome other Perſons. And, III. concludes by Salutations and Wiſhes, and by declaring, that thoſe who did not love the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*

Chriſt ſincerely, were under the Judgment of God, and ought not to be look'd upon as Brethren, or Members of the Church.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Exhortations which St. *Paul* makes the *Corinthians*, to engage them to aſſiſt the Churches of *Judea*, for which there was a Collection making, and to lay apart ſomething on that Account every firſt Day of the Week, is a Leſſon to us, that every one ought to exerciſe Charity according to his Ability, as often as there is a proper Occaſion, and particularly on the Lord's Day. II. The Manner in which St. *Paul* recommends *Timothy*, and ſome other zealous and godly Perſons, teaches us, that we ought to have great Conſideration for the true Miniſters of the Lord, and for all ſuch as devote themſelves to his Service. III. The Salutations we read at the End of this Epiſtle ſhew, that there ought to be a moſt ſtrict Communion among the Churches, and Chriſtians of all Parts; that all good Chriſtians love one another affectionately, and eſpecially, that the true Miniſters of the Lord do pray without ceaſing for all the Faithful, wiſhing them the Grace of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*. Finally, We ought to give a very particular Attention to the *Anathema* which St. *Paul* denounced againſt all thoſe that do not love Chriſt ſincerely, whereby he threatens them with the Curſe of God, and requires all the Churches,

es, not to conſider as Chriſtians thoſe who give publick Proofs that they are not ſo. This denotes plainly, that it is the Duty of the Church to Excommunicate ſcandalous and prophane Perſons; and that all ſuch as have not a true Love for our Saviour, and who do not keep his Commandments, do by no means belong to Him, but remain under the Curſe of God.



II. *Corinthians.*

CHAP. I.

THE ſecond Epiſtle of St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, was writ about the *Fifty ſecond* Year of our Lord. The principal Deſign of the Apoſtle in this Epiſtle is, to defend his Miniſtry againſt thoſe who diſparag'd it among the *Corinthians*.

After the Salutation, St. *Paul* ſpeaks in this Chapter, I. Of the great Afflictions he had undergone in *Aſia*, and from which God had deliver'd him by a kind of Miracle. II. He tells the *Corinthians* in the next Place, that if he did not come and ſee them, as he had promiſed, it did not proceed from Levity nor Inconſtancy, nor want of Kindneſs towards them; but that he had delayed his Voyage, that he might not be obliged to reprove and chaſtiſe them on account of the Diſorders that prevailed in their Church.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT St. *Paul* ſays in the beginning of this Epiſtle, of his Sufferings, as well as of the Aſſiſtance and Comfort which God had ſent him, teaches us, I. That the Faithful are ſometimes expoſed to great Dangers, and extream Afflictions, but that God ſupports and ſtrengthens them in ſuch a State, and at length graciouſly delivers them; that theſe Afflictions do thereby produce moſt wholeſome effects, not only for the Joy of thoſe who are Afflicted, but likewiſe for the Edification of their Brethren; ſince thoſe who have thus ſuffered, are more proper to comfort and encourage others in any trouble whatſoever. St. *Paul* adds farther, upon this Occaſion, that the mutual Prayers of the Faithful do greatly contribute to obtain from God theſe kinds of Deliverances. II. What St. *Paul* ſays of the ſincerity in which he behaved through the whole courſe of his Miniſtry, and particularly towards the *Corinthians*, ſhould be an Inſtruction and Example to all Chriſtians, and chiefly to Chriſt's Miniſters, and teach 'em, that as the Maſter whom they profeſs to ſerve is Truth it ſelf, ſo they ought likewiſe to behave with Sincerity, to avoid every thing particularly that Borders upon Levity and Inconſtancy, to ſpeak and act always with a ſpirit of Candour, Zeal, Humility, and Charity, to the end that they may thereby approve themſelves both to God and Man.

CHAP.

CHAP II.

I. ST. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, that it was to ſpare them, and that he might not have the Sorrow of reproving them for their irregularities, that he forbore going to *Corinth*; and he requires them to receive into the Peace of the Church, the inceſtuous Perſon that had been Excommunicated, and of whom he had made mention in the former Epiſtle, becauſe he had repented. II. He acquaints them with ſome of his Travels, and upon that Occaſion ſpeaks of the Efficacy and Fruits of his Miniſtry.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. ST. *Paul* ſhews in this Chapter a great Tenderneſs for the *Corinthians*, and particularly for that inceſtuous Perſon whom he had delivered to Satan, but who had afterwards repented. Theſe Sentiments of St. *Paul*, may ſerve for a Rule to Paſtors, and inſpire them with a tender Love for their Flocks, and even for the greateſt Sinners. We ſee here, that if the Church is obliged to cut off ſcandalous Sinners from her Communion, ſhe ought not to do it, but only with a View to bring them to Repentance; and that when we diſcover in them ſufficient tokens of Amendment, we ought to receive them with Joy and heartineſs. II. The Thankſgivings which St. *Paul* renders to God, for the Glorious Succeſs of his Miniſtry, are a Proof of his Humility as well as of his great Zeal. The true Miniſters of Chriſt are never more glad, than when they can ſpread the Knowledge of God; but they always attribute to God alone, and to the Ef-

ficacy of his Grace, all the good Succeſs they meet with. III. The laſt Verſes of this Chapter teach us, that the Preaching of the Goſpel does not always produce the ſame effects in all kinds of Perſons; that it is to ſome a ſavour of Death, that is to ſay, an Occaſion of Condemnation, ſince by rejecting this Goſpel they become more Wicked, and aggravate their Puniſhment; but to others 'tis a ſavour of Life, that is to ſay, an efficacious Means to bring them to a ſpiritual Life, and to Salvation.

CHAP. III.

I. ST. *Paul* repreſents to the *Corinthians*, that their Converſion to the Chriſtian Religion was a ſufficient proof of his Calling, and that he ſtood in need of no other recommendation to them, than the Teſtimony of their Conſcience; but he acknowledges at the ſame Time, that the Efficacy of his Miniſtry proceeded only from God. II. He ſhews in the next Place, that the Miniſtry of the Goſpel is much more excellent than that of the Law, foraſmuch as this laſt was imperfect, uncapable of giving Life, and was not to continue always; from whence St. *Paul* concludes, that thoſe who had adhered to the Law of *Moſes*, remained in Ignorance, and that there be none but thoſe who cleave to the Goſpel, that are truly enlightened, and enjoy the Liberty and Glory of God. The Apoſtle ſays all this, to defend himſelf againſt certain Teachers that oppoſed him, and made a ſhew of a great Zeal for the Law of *Moſes*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter teaches us, I. That that which makes the Glory of the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, and which recommends them to God and Men, is the Fruits of their Preaching, and the Share they have in the Love and Affections of Chriſtians. II. That they ought not to aſcribe to themſelves the Succeſs of their Miniſtry; but that the Honour of it is due to God alone. III. That the Goſpel is much more excellent than the Law, and the Miniſtry thereof infinitely more glorious than that of *Moſes*, ſince the Chriſtian Doctrine gives us a much more perfect Knowledge of the Will of God by Jeſus Chriſt, cauſing us to partake of the true Liberty and Glory of the Lord Himſelf. From whence it follows, that if there be any who don't believe, it proceeds from their wilful Blindneſs. That we ought to value this Goſpel beyond all things, and that as well thoſe who Preach it, as thoſe who make Profeſſion of it, ought to do it openly, and without Shame, as St. *Paul* will ſhew us in the following Chapter.

CHAP. IV.

I. THE Apoſtle continues to ſpeak of the Courage and Sincerity, with which he had exerciſed his Miniſtry; but he ſhews that there were incredulous Perſons, who did not believe in the Goſpel, whilſt, on the contrary, there were others, whoſe Eyes were open to this heavenly Light. II. He ſays farther, that he himſelf and other Miniſters being weak Men, the Efficacy of their Preaching did not proceed from themſelves, but came from God

alone. He diſcourſes likewiſe of the Perſecutions and Sufferings to which he was expoſed, and ſays, that Faith in Chriſt, and the Hopes of eternal Glory, were the Cauſe that he did not loſe Courage, but that he underwent all theſe Evils with Perſeverance, and even with Joy.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Conſiderations which occur to us here, are the following: I. That the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt ought to put away all Artifice and Diſſimulation, and to ſpeak always freely and ſincerely, as in the Preſence of God, ſeeking only to manifeſt the Truth in the Conſcience of all Men. II. That if there are any ſuch People as will not acknowledge the Truth of the Goſpel, it is wholly their own Fault, and they periſh juſtly in their Unbelief. III. That the Servants of God and all Chriſtians ought to bear with Courage the heavieſt Afflictions, ſince they tend to the Edification of the Church, and ſince we know that thoſe who partake of the Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt ſhall likewiſe partake of his Reſurrection, Life, and Glory. IV. That Afflictions are light, and of ſhort duration, and produce in us an infinitely excelling Glory; but that the means of enduring 'em with Patience, of never loſing Courage, and of always perſevering in Faith, is, not to look at things viſible, which are only for a Time; but at the inviſible, which are Eternal.

CHAP. V.

I. THE Apoſtle continues the Diſcourſe he had begun concerning the Afflictions he underwent, and the Comfort he received from the Hope of a better Life; he ſpeaks of the

the Happineſs which the Faithful ſhall enjoy after their Death; and he ſays, that the Conſideration of that Happineſs, and of the Judgment at which we muſt all appear, were the Cauſe that he earneſtly deſired to leave this World, to be with the Lord; and that in this Expectation, he ſuffer'd Afflictions with Courage, and labour'd to render himſelf acceptable to God, by faithfully diſcharging his Duty. II. He returns next to the Diſcourſe about his Miniſtry, and ſays, that the Love of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who died for all Men, was a ſtrong Motive to Him, to live only for the Edification of the Believers. He declares, he did no longer adhere to external Things, ſuch as the Ceremonies of the Law, and the Advantages of which the *Jews* boaſted; and that he had no other Deſign, but to make Men become new Creatures, and to reconcile them with God by *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter contains very comfortable and wholſome Doctrines. We ſee here, I. The ſweet and glorious Hope which Believers have, that tho' their Body be deſtroyed by Death, yet there is another more happy State, and never-fading Glory, which waits for them; and that when they leave this Body, they will be with the Lord. II. St. *Paul* teaches us in this Chapter, that *We muſt all appear before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt, that every one may receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* III. He ſhews the Uſe to be made of this Doctrine is, continually to ſigh after, and to long for this happy State, which is reſerved for the Children of God, and in the mean time to live in the Fear of the Lord, and in Faith, ſtudying to render our ſelves acceptable

ptable to Him in all Times, and in all Places. IV. St. *Paul* adds, that the great Love which Chriſt has ſhewn us, in dying for our Salvation, is a moſt preſſing Argument, if we underſtand it rightly, to live no longer to our ſelves, but to employ our whole Life for the Edification of our Brethren, and to the Glory of Him who died and roſe again for us. *Laſtly*, Since the Deſign of the Miniſtry of the Goſpel is, as we have heard, to make Men become new Creatures, and to reconcile them to God by *Jeſus Chriſt*, we ought to wean our Hearts more and more from the World, to become new Men, to ſet a high Value upon this Goſpel, and zealouſly to improve the Means which God offers us, to be reconciled with Him, and to obtain from his Mercy, the pardon of our Sins, through the Merit of *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord.

CHAP. VI.

Add to it the firſt Verſe of Chap. VII.

THIS Chapter conſiſts of two Parts. I. The Apoſtle ſays, that he had ſet himſelf to diſcharge his Miniſtry with Integrity, Zeal, Charity, and Patience, in the midſt of the Afflictions and Diſgraces to which he had been expoſed; and he conjures the *Corinthians* to make ſuitable Returns to this great Zeal and fervent Love with which he was animated for their ſake. II. He exhorts them to imitate his Zeal and Sincerity, by making a pure Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and for that Reaſon, avoiding all Commerce with Idolaters, and by becoming pure both in Body and Soul.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt Inſtruction we have here, relates to the Miniſters of the Goſpel. St. *Paul* teaches them by his own Example, to diſcharge their Office with fidelity, to behave in ſuch a Manner, as to give no Offence, nor to diſhonour their Miniſtry, but to render it recommendable by the Purity of their Life, by a ſincere and open Profeſſion of their Virtue, by a perfect Charity, by Meekneſs, by Humility, and Patience in Affliction. II. We learn in the ſecond Place, that as Paſtors ought entirely to devote themſelves to the Church, and be full of a tender Love for their Flocks, ſo the Flocks ought to make ſuitable Returns, and to eſteem them no leſs tenderly in the Lord. We may obſerve, III. That as St. *Paul* forbids the *Corinthians* to have to do with Idolaters, ſo neither is it allowable for Chriſtians to aſſociate themſelves with carnal Men, and to join a worldly Life to the Profeſſion of the Goſpel. Let us always remember for this purpoſe, that there is no Agreement between Righteouſneſs and Iniquity, between Light and Darkneſs; that God having choſen us to be his Children, if we would have Him own us as ſuch, we ought to avoid Correſpondence with worldly Men, to depart from them, and to have no ſhare in their Pollutions; and that the great and excellent Promiſes which He has made us, do indiſpenſably oblige us *to cleanſe our ſelves from all Defilement of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God.* May He himſelf grant us this Grace!

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

I. ST. *Paul* exhorts the *Corinthians* to entertain the ſame Affection for him as he had for them. II. He ſignifies next, the great Joy he had to learn by *Titus* what great Impreſſion his Epiſtle had made upon them, and what they had done after receiving it, with reſpect to the inceſtuous Perſon in their Church; whereupon he takes occaſion to ſpeak of the Nature and Effects of true Repentance.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE muſt make the following Conſiderations upon this Chapter. I. That there ought to be a great Love, and a mutual Tenderneſs, between Paſtors and their Flocks, ſuch for inſtance as St. *Paul* had conceived for the *Corinthians*, and which he wiſhed they might have for him. II. The Manner in which the *Corinthians* received *Titus*, and the Effect which St. *Paul*'s Reproofs produced upon them, teaches us, that Churches ought to receive with Love and Reliance, the faithful Miniſters of the Lord, and ſubmit to their Corrections and Remonſtrances. III. The great Joy with which St. *Paul* was filled, when *Titus* informed him of the happy State of the Church of *Corinth*, ſhews, that the ſweeteſt Pleaſure which Paſtors can taſt is, to ſee the Fruits of their Miniſtry. This Chapter inſtructs us, IV. upon the Nature of true Repentance. St. *Paul* ſays, there is a Sorrow according to the World, which is not attended with any wholſome Change, and which only produces Death; whereas godly Sorrow is followed by Peace, and very ſweet Comfort, and produces moſt advan-

advantageous Effects; ſince it fills thoſe whom it affects with a lively Sorrow and juſt Indignation againſt themſelves, inſpiring them with Fear and Zeal, and provoking them to repair, by all poſſible Means, the Evil they have done.

CHAP. VIII.

I. THE Apoſtle informs the *Corinthians*, of the Liberality which the Churches of *Macedonia* had ſhewn in a Collection made for that of *Jeruſalem*. II. He exhorts them to imitate that Example, and finiſh that Collection which had been begun the foregoing Year, and tells them that he ſent them for that purpoſe *Titus*, and another Perſon, which was probably St. *Luke*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS is a Chapter, which furniſhes us with divers Inſtructions about Alms. I. The firſt is, that Chriſtians are obliged to exerciſe Charity as often as they meet with an Occaſion, and are able to do it, eſpecially when 'tis to aſſiſt their Brethren. St. *Paul* ſays upon this ſubject, that Perſons who have devoted themſelves to God, and are well inſtructed in the Grace of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, do always diſcharge this Duty with Pleaſure. II. The Example of the Churches of *Macedonia*, which this Apoſtle propoſes to the *Corinthians*, ſhews, that ſuch as exerciſe Charity do a very good thing, ſince they do not only relieve the Neceſſitous, but likewiſe ſet a good Pattern to the whole Church, and ſtir up others to imitate the ſame. III. That in the Works of Charity, God regards chiefly the Readineſs and good Will wherewith

it

it is performed. IV. That Charity ought to be done in a juſt Proportion, ſo as that every one may contribute according to his Power, and that ſome be not more burthen'd than others; and that 'tis but reaſonable that thoſe who have been relieved, ſhould likewiſe aſſiſt others in their turn. V. And *Laſtly*, The great Precautions that St. *Paul* uſes in the Diſtribution of Collections, to the end that no Body might blame him, and the Care he takes to put them into the Hands of faithful and approved Perſons, ſhews, that we ought to adminiſter Charity with very great Integrity and Prudence; and that they who have the Care of Diſtributing the Alms of the Faithful, ought to do it in ſuch a Manner, as to give no Handle for Reproach, nor even, if poſſible, for the leaſt Suſpicion.

CHAP. IX.

I. ST. *Paul* continues to exhort the *Corinthians* to aſſiſt the Churches of *Judea*, and to do it bountifully and freely. II. And that he may engage them to this Duty, he tells them of the Bleſſing that charitable Perſons are to expect from God; and of the good Effects which the Exerciſe of Charity produces for the Glory of God, and the Edification of the Church.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter treats of Alms and Charity as well as the foregoing, and the Apoſtle propoſes here three Things particularly, which we ought carefully to retain, *viz.* The Manner of doing our Charity; the Reward of charitable People; and the Effects that Charity

rity produces. I. As to the Manner, St. *Paul* ſays, that in order to pleaſe God, we muſt give as much as we are able, with chearfulneſs and liberality, becauſe *God loves a chearful Giver*. II. The Promiſes he makes the *Corinthians*, do not allow us to doubt, whether God will reward benevolent and charitable Perſons, even with temporal Bleſſings, by multiplying their Goods in ſuch Manner, that they will always have not only what is neceſſary for themſelves, but likewiſe ſufficient to aſſiſt ſuch as are in Want. III. We ought likewiſe ſeriouſly to conſider the good Effects which Charity produces, ſince it rejoices the Saints, comforts the Afflicted, engaging them to praiſe God, edifies the Church, and is the Cauſe that many People ſeeing the Bountifulneſs of the Faithful, do glorifie the holy Name of God, do pray for charitable Perſons, and are ſtirred up to imitate them; all which contributes greatly to promote the Goſpel. Theſe Conſiderations ſhould provoke us to Charity, and 'tis particularly the Duty of thoſe, to whom God has given the good Things of this Life, to improve what they have now heard.

CHAP. X.

THE Deſign of St. *Paul* in this Chapter and the following is, to defend himſelf againſt thoſe who endeavour to leſſen his Authority, and to render him contemptible to the *Corinthians*. 'Tis with this View he ſpeaks, I. Of the ſpiritual Power God had given him, and the Uſe he made of it, for the Edification of the Church. II. He ſays next, that he was not full of Pride, like thoſe who ſpoke Evil of him, albeit that he enjoyed ſome Advantages which they had not.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Care that St. *Paul* takes to juſtifie and defend himſelf againſt ſuch as blamed him, and what he ſays concerning his Authority, and the ſpiritual Power God had given him, ſhews, that it is lawful to maintain one's Innocence, provided it be done with Temper, and for a good End. It proves, particularly, that altho' the Servants of God ought to be entirely free from Pride, yet they are allowed, yea, they are even obliged to aſſert the Honour of their Miniſtry; to make Uſe of the Authority they have received from Chriſt, agreeable to his Intentions; to reſiſt with ſteadineſs all thoſe who would obſtruct the promoting the Kingdom of God, and the Edification of the Church: And that the end which they ought to propoſe to themſelves, is to remove all obſtructions to the Knowledge of God, and to draw the Minds of Men to the Obedience of Chriſt. We are even taught thereby, that Chriſtians ought to have in reverence good and faithful Paſtors, and to ſubmit to their Authority, ſince they likewiſe have their Commiſſion from Jeſus Chriſt, though they be much inferior to the Apoſtles. *Laſtly*, The manner in which St. *Paul* ſpeaks of himſelf, and the remarks he makes upon the Pride of thoſe Teachers who oppoſed him, ſhould make us own, that Humility is the Character of a true Miniſter of Chriſt, and 'tis a great Misfortune to the Church, when the Miniſters that are ſet over her are animated with a Spirit of Pride, Preſumption, Envy, and Jealouſie; and when they occaſion Strife and Diviſions.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

I. ST. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, that the great Love he had for them, and his fear leaſt they ſhould be ſeduced by thoſe who endeavoured to vilifie him, compelled him to make mention, tho' againſt his Mind, of the Gifts and Graces wherewith God had enriched him, and of what he had done for them. II. He brings to their Remembrance, that he had declared the Goſpel to them without receiving any thing from them, which was more than the falſe Apoſtles could ſay. III. And he ſhews Laſtly, that he could boaſt of his being better than thoſe falſe Apoſtles, as well by reaſon of his great Labours, as on Account of his Sufferings, of which he gives us here a very remarkable Catalogue.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THAT which we may obſerve in general in this Chapter is, that St. *Paul* does here maintain the Honour of his Apoſtleſhip, but does it after a very humble Manner; and that though he ſpeaks to his own Praiſe, yet the Qualifications and Excuſes he alledges, do ſufficiently ſhew that he was forced to do it. From hence we may conclude, I. That we ought always to ſpeak of our ſelves with great Modeſty; that Modeſty and Humility ought particularly to be found in the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt; but that they may nevertheleſs aſſert their own Innocency, and the Honour of their Miniſtry, when 'tis neceſſary for publick Edification. II. The fear which St. *Paul* had, leaſt the *Corinthians* ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be drawn aſide from the Simplicity of the Goſpel by falſe Teachers, and what he ſays,

ſays, that the Miniſters of Satan transform themſelves into Angels of Light, is a warning to Chriſtians to be upon their Defence, and carefully to diſtinguiſh Doctrines, and the Propagators of them, and not ſuffer themſelves to be ſurprized by the falſe Appearances of Piety and Zeal. III. We have ſeen that St. *Paul* would receive no Stipend from the *Corinthians*, tho' he loved them, and was beloved by them; this he did to ſhew that he was not like the falſe Apoſtles, who railed at him, and were themſelves mercenary. This is an Example of Zeal, Prudence, and Diſintereſtedneſs, which ought to be imitated by all Paſtors. IV. We ſhould ſeriouſly attend to the Account which the Apoſtle here gives of his great Sufferings, and of ſo many Dangers and Perſecutions he had paſſed through, and from which God had delivered him. This is a noble Proof of his Zeal, and the Truth of the Doctrine he Preached; but it likewiſe ſhews, that Chriſtians ought not to be terrified at Afflictions, eſpecially the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhould laſtly conſider very ſeriouſly, what St. *Paul* ſays, that he was continually taken up by the Care of the Churches, and that no evil could befal them but what afflicted, and as it were conſumed him. 'Tis thus that Paſtors ought to be employed Day and Night, in the Duties of their Miniſtry, and be more attentive to what concerns the Edification of their Flocks than all other things beſides.

CHAP. XII.

I. ST. *Paul* continuing to ſpeak of the Advantages that diſtinguiſhed him from other Miniſters, relates how he was carried up to Heaven; but does it after an exceeding humble Manner; by which it appears, he would not have

have mention'd it, if he had not been as it were forced to it. II. After this, he tells the *Corinthians* he would ſhortly come to them, and therefore as he had not been, ſo neither would he now be burdenſome to 'em; he manifeſts an extream Tenderneſs for 'em, declaring he would not have writ to 'em as he did, but for their Edification, and to the End that he might not be obliged to uſe 'em with ſeverity, when he ſhould arrive at *Corinth*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE raviſhment or carrying up of St. *Paul* into Heaven, which he mentions in this Chapter, was a glorious Privilege of this Apoſtle, demonſtrating the Divinity of his vocation, and certainty of the Life to come. The way in which St. *Paul* relates this matter, and the Excuſes he makes in giving the Relation of it, ſhew that we may be allowed to ſpeak of the Favours God has beſtowed on us; but that we muſt not do it, ſave only when 'tis neceſſary for the Glory of God, and in an humble Senſe of our own unworthineſs, but by no means in a Way of boaſting or extolling our ſelves. The Apoſtle ſays, God had put a Thorn in his Fleſh, to the End he might not be puffed up, on Account of the Revelations he had had in his Extacy; which imports that a bad Angel did, by the Permiſſion of God, cauſe him to feel very ſenſible Pains in his Body; this teaches us that we are in Danger of growing Proud, when any conſiderable advantage befals us, and that 'tis neceſſary that God ſhould viſit even the holieſt Men with Afflictions, and matters of Mortification, to keep 'em humble. We have ſeen that though St. *Paul* prayed earneſtly to be delivered from this Thorn, yet the Lord did not hearken to him in that thing,

anſwering him, *My Grace is ſufficient.* God does not always hear the Prayers, by which we beg to be delivered from the evils of the Body; but his Grace ought to ſatisfie us; and He leaves us under Sufferings, to the End we may become more ſenſible of his Strength in our Weakneſs. Laſtly, the tender Love St. *Paul* bore to the *Corinthians*, and the Apprehenſion he had of being obliged to deal rigorouſly with thoſe that did not amend, ſhew that Paſtors ought tenderly to Love their Flocks, and that 'tis a Subject of Grief to 'em, to be forced to uſe the Severity of Cenſures and Diſcipline againſt ſuch as did not repent, but nevertheleſs, they ought to do it as often as the Health of Sinners and the Edification of the Church render it neceſſary.

CHAP. XIII.

I. THE Apoſtle acquaints the *Corinthians* again, that he deſigned to viſit 'em; that he would not ſpare thoſe who had not mended their Lives; and ſince ſome among 'em queſtioned his Authority, he would make 'em know by experience and by effects, that as Jeſus Chriſt, though he had been a weak Man, governed by the Power of God; ſo likewiſe he himſelf, though he was look'd upon as a mean Perſon, yet had received from the Lord the Power and Authority of an Apoſtle of Chriſt. II. He exhorts 'em to examine and correct themſelves, telling them he deſired nothing ſo much as to find 'em in a good Condition, to the End that he might not be obliged to deal rigorouſly with them, though they ſhould call in queſtion his Character of an Apoſtle. He concludes with a general Exhortation to Amendment and Peace, and with hearty Wiſhes.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may obſerve in this Chapter, the Zeal, and at the ſame time the Meekneſs, Charity, and Humility of St. *Paul*. This Apoſtle was reſolved not to ſpare the Incorrigible; yet he wiſhed the *Corinthians* might amend themſelves, and not force him to uſe the Power he had received from Chriſt as an Apoſtle. In Imitation of him, the Miniſters of Chriſt ought to be animated with a Spirit of Charity and Humility, and as much as they can, uſing Meekneſs inſtead of Severity. Nevertheleſs, they ought not to ſpare harden'd Sinners when there is an occaſion for it. It appears likewiſe from thence, that 'tis more laudable and pleaſing to God, that Chriſtians ſhould do their Duty willingly, and of their own accord, rather than to be compelled thereto by rigour and ſeverity. St. *Paul* concludes this Epiſtle in exhorting the *Corinthians* to ſpiritual Joy, to Repentance and Peace, by theſe admirable Expreſſions: *Finally, Brethren, farewel, be ye perfect, be of good Comfort, be of one Mind, live in Peace; and the God of Love and Peace be with you.* ——*The Grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghoſt be with you all.* Amen.

GALATIANS.

CHAP. I.

IN the Epiſtle to the *Galatians*, which was writ about the Year *Fifty one* of our Lord, St. *Paul* oppoſes thoſe who taught, that in order to be ſaved, it was not enough to believe in *Jeſus Chriſt*, but it was likewiſe neceſſary to be circumciſed, and to keep the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moſes*. The Apoſtle proves againſt thoſe People, that Chriſtians are juſtified by Faith alone in *Jeſus Chriſt*, without any Obligation of obſerving thoſe Ceremonies. He afterwards exhorts the *Galatians* to continue in the ſame Liberty, but warns them againſt abuſing it, and falling into Licentiouſneſs.

In the *firſt* Chapter, St. *Paul*, after the Salutation, I. reproves the *Galatians* for departing from the Doctrine which he had taught them, which

which was the only Doctrine they ought to receive. II. He tells them in the next Place, that he had received this Doctrine from the Revelation of *Jesus Christ*; upon which Occasion, he puts them in Mind how zealous he had been formerly for the Ceremonies and Traditions of the *Jews*, but that God had called him to the Knowledge of the Truth; and that immediately after his Conversion, he had preached the Gospel in several Places, without consulting any Man, or any Apostle. St. *Paul* speaks thus, to shew that he was called by Christ only, and not by St. *Peter*, nor by any other Person, and that he had the same Authority as the rest of the Apostles.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter presents us with two principal Reflexions. I. That Christians ought never to vary from the true Doctrine of the Gospel, which was preached and reduced to Writing by the Apostles, but that they ought to shun all those that would preach a Doctrine different from the same. II. The Account St. *Paul* gives of his Conversion, and what he says to prove that he had his Authority from *Jesus Christ*, obliges us, on the one Hand, to receive his Doctrine as Divine, and to submit to it; and on the other, to acknowledge the Power and Mercy of the Lord towards those who were in Ignorance aad Error, of which we see an illustrious Example in the Conversion and Calling of St. *Paul* to the Office of an Apostle, who, before that, had been a declared Enemy of the Christian Religion, and a Persecutor of the Church.

CHAP. II.

I. ST. *Paul*, to ſupport his Calling and Authority, and to ſhew that he was not inferior to any of the Apoſtles, ſays, that not only his Doctrine had been approved at *Jeruſalem* by St. *Peter*, St. *James*, and St. *John*; but even that he had rebuked St. *Peter*, becauſe that out of his too great Complaiſance for the *Jews*, he durſt not eat with thoſe Gentiles, who had believed in Jeſus Chriſt, which might have been an Occaſion of incouraging the *Jews* in their Prejudices, and of obliging the *Gentiles* to be ſubject to the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moſes*. II. He teaches next, that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* are juſtified by Faith only in Jeſus Chriſt, but ſhews at the ſame Time, that his Doctrine is ſo far from favouring looſeneſs of Life, that, on the contrary, Faith in Chriſt crucified draws Men from Sin, and cauſes them to lead a Life which is purely Spiritual.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have the two following Things to obſerve, for our Inſtruction, upon this Chapter: I. The Authority, Sincerity, and Zeal, with which St. *Paul* preached the pure Doctrine of the Goſpel, ſo far as even to reprove St. *Peter* for his too great Complaiſance to the *Jews*, which induced him to avoid all Correſpondence with the Gentiles. This ſhould convince all Chriſtians, and eſpecially Miniſters of the Goſpel, that they ought always to follow their Call, and to walk with uprightneſs, according to the Truth; and that we ought never to uſe any Subterfuges, or the leaſt Diſſimulation, in matters of Religion. II. St. *Paul* eſtabliſhes in this Chapter, the Doctrine

ctrine of Juſtification by Faith alone in Jeſus Chriſt; but he teaches at the ſame Time, and very expreſly too, that ſuch Doctrine does by no means authorize Men to live in Sin; that, on the contrary, the true Faith by which we are Juſtified does neceſſarily deſtroy Sin in us, and cauſes us to live to God. This is what St. *Paul* teaches us by theſe Words, which ſo well deſcribe the Condition and Sentiments of a true Believer in Jeſus Chriſt; *I am Crucified with Chriſt: Nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: And the Life which I now live in the Fleſh, I live by Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himſelf for me.* God grant us all theſe Thoughts. *Amen.*

CHAP. III.

I. ST. *Paul* blames the *Galatians* for departing from that Doctrine they had before embraced, and which teaches, that Men are juſtified by Faith in Chriſt without the Works of the Law; to ſhew that that was the only true Doctrine, he puts 'em in Mind, that when they received it, God was pleaſed to Communicate to them the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. II. He proves by the Example of *Abraham*, by the Nature of the Promiſes which were made to him and his Poſterity, and by the Curſe which the Law denounces againſt thoſe that ſhould not perfectly fulfil it, that all Men, even the Gentiles themſelves, muſt be juſtified by Faith in Chriſt; from whence it follows, that thoſe who pretended to be juſtified by the Law, deprived themſelves of theſe Promiſes, and continued under the Curſe. III. He confirms the ſame by obſerving that the Law of *Moſes*, which was not given till long after the Promiſe that God had made to *Abraham*, could

not be annulled by the ſaid Promiſe; but that God had given that Law by the Miniſtry of *Moſes*, he being Mediator between God and the People, on Account of the Sins of the *Iſraelites*, until the Time that Chriſt ſhould come; and to prepare Men to receive the Grace which was to render them all Children of God, as well the *Gentiles* as the *Jews*; according to the Promiſe that had been made to the Patriarch *Abraham*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE are to conſider upon this Chapter, I. That it is a great Folly, and an extream Blindneſs, to turn aſide from the Truth, and to end ill, after having begun well. II. That the wonderful Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, which were communicated to the firſt Chriſtians, prove the Divinity of the Doctrine which they had embraced, and its Excellency above the Law. We ſee, III. the Proofs St. *Paul* alledges to ſhew, that it is by Faith in Chriſt that Men are juſtified, which Proofs are taken from the Example of *Abraham*, from the Promiſes God had made him, from the Curſe which the Law denounced againſt the *Iſraelites*, and from the Time when the Law was given. This ſhould induce us to own the Truth of St. *Paul*'s Doctrine, ſince we find ſuch ſolid Proofs of it in the Law it ſelf, and in the Covenant which God had made with *Abraham*. We ſee likewiſe thereby, that God had given to this Apoſtle great Lights, and an extraordinary Wiſdom. IV. And Laſtly, the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God appear after a more ſenſible Manner, in his having given the Law to bring Men to Chriſt, till the Time ſhould come, when He would receive them into his Covenant, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. Let us from thence acknowledge, that ſince we are now become

come the Children and Heirs of God, by Faith in Chriſt, we are bound to render Him a ſincere and filial Obedience, and to diſcharge thoſe Duties to which we are engaged by the Covenant of Grace, wherein we have the Happineſs to live.

CHAP. IV.

THIS Chapter conſiſts of three Parts. I. In the *Firſt*, St. *Paul* ſhews by the Difference there was between the Condition of the *Jews* whilſt under the Law, and their glorious State when they ſubmitted to the Goſpel, having the Happineſs to be adopted the Children of God, how much the *Galatians* were to blame, in deſiring to return to the Yoke of the *Moſaical* Ceremonies. II. He ſpeaks in the ſecond Part, of the great Affection which he bore them, and of that which they formerly had conceived for him, and ſhews them how uneaſie he was on their Account. III. He repreſents the Difference there was between the Covenant of the Law, and that of the Goſpel, and between thoſe who adhered to the one or the other, under the Types of *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*, the two Sons of *Abraham*; one of whom was born according to the Courſe of Nature, of *Hagar* that was a Servant; and the other given miraculouſly, and in Conſequence of the Promiſe of God, by *Sarah*, who was a free Woman, and the Wife of *Abraham*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE general aim of this Chapter is, I. To inſtruct us in the Difference there is between *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, and to ſhew how

how Happy we are to live in the Times of the Goſpel, and to have been adopted of God, to be his Children through Faith in Chriſt. This is a Doctrine which ſhould excite in us a lively Senſe of our Happineſs, and great gratitude towards God; It ought likewiſe to inſpire us with Sentiments worthy the Glory of our Adoption, and eſpecially induce us to live as the Children of God, and to obey him willingly, and from a principle of Love. II. The Counſel St. *Paul* gave the *Galatians*, on Account of their ſtill cleaving to the Ceremonies of the Law, proves that Paſtors ought carefully to fortifie their Flocks againſt Error and Seduction; it alſo ſhews how blameworthy thoſe Chriſtians are, who having the Knowledge of the Goſpel, apply themſelves to the vain and frivolous Things of this World. III. We may have obſerved in this Chapter the extream Affection of St. *Paul* towards the *Galatians*, and the uneaſineſs he felt on their Account, as alſo the extraordinary reſpect and love which they had for him, having received him as an Angel of God. We ſee hereby how much the true Shepherds love the Church of the Lord, and how greatly they are grieved, when they find that their Sheep do not anſwer their Love and Care. This ſhews likewiſe, that Chriſtians ought tenderly to cheriſh good and faithful Paſtors; that they who have not theſe Sentiments, or who having once had them, do not preſerve them, are very much to blame, as well as thoſe who conceive an averſion for their Miniſters, becauſe they tell them the Truth.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THERE are two Parts in this Chapter. I. In the firſt, St. *Paul* exhorts the *Galatians* to continue in Chriſtian Liberty, which he ſays, conſiſts in their not being ſubject to Circumciſion, and to the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moſes*. He tells them that Chriſt would be of no Advantage to them, if they retain theſe Ceremonies, and adviſes them not to hearken to ſuch as would ſuggeſt other Opinions to them, and even not to endure them among them. II. He exhorts them not to abuſe this Liberty, nor to take Occaſion from thence to live Licentiouſly, nor to follow the Deſires of the Fleſh. He recommends to them to love one another, and to live in Peace, and particularizes the Sins to which Men are carried by the Fleſh, and the Fruits which the Holy Ghoſt produces in thoſe he loves.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS is a Chapter that is very inſtructive, and we ought carefully to remember the Doctrine contained in it. St. *Paul* explains here very plainly, how we are to underſtand what he has taught in this Chapter, namely, that *we are juſtified by Faith, without the Works of the Law*. That is to ſay, Chriſtians are not obliged to obſerve the Circumciſion, nor the other Ceremonies of the Law; but that they are under an indiſpenſable Obligation of leading a holy Life. The Apoſtle ſays, in the cleareſt and moſt poſitive manner, that the Faith which juſtifies, operates by Charity and good Works; and that we ought not to take occaſion from our Chriſtian Liberty to live in Licentiouſneſs.

centiouſneſs. He ſhews what a great difference there is between thoſe that live according to the Fleſh, and thoſe that are animated by the Spirit of God; he ſpecifies the Sins of the Fleſh, the chief of which are Impurity, Senſuality, Diſputes, and Diviſions; and declares, that thoſe who commit theſe Sins, ſhall never enjoy the Kingdom of God. He ſhews, *Laſtly*, what are the Effects which the Spirit of God produces in true Believers. Let us apply theſe Inſtructions to our Advancement in Piety and Holineſs; and let us ſhew by our Behaviour, that we are of the Number of thoſe in whom God dwells, and who have crucified the Fleſh with the Luſts thereof.

CHAP. VI.

I. ST. *Paul* exhorts the *Galatians*, to reprove with Meekneſs thoſe that fall into any Fault, and to be animated towards them with a Spirit of Charity, Humility, and Forbearance. He exhorts them, II. To provide for the Subſiſtence of thoſe that were their Teachers, and to exerciſe Charity. III. He concludes in adviſing them once again, not to hearken to thoſe that would oblige them to be Circumciſed, and makes a ſhort recapitulation of his Doctrine, and of this whole Epiſtle.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. *Paul* teaches us in this Chapter, I. That we ought to bear and reprove with Meekneſs thoſe who ſin through Infirmity, conſidering them always as Brethren, and remembering that we likewiſe may be tempted, and that every one is accountable to God for himſelf, and muſt bear his own Burthen. II. That Chriſtians

ans are obliged to provide for the Maintenance of their Paſtors, and to do good to all Men, but eſpecially to the Members of the Church. III. That theſe are indiſpenſable Duties, and that God will have regard to the Manner of our Diſcharging them, as St. *Paul* ſhews, by ſaying: *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.* Laſtly, It muſt be obſerved and carefully remembered, what St. *Paul* ſays at the end of this Epiſtle, and which is the Summary of his whole Doctrine; *viz.* that God will not conſider whether a Man be a *Jew* or a *Gentile*, whether he be circumciſed or uncircumciſed; but that what he chiefly requires is, that we become new Men and regenerated. This is the Meaning of the following Words: *In Chriſt Jeſus neither Circumciſion availeth any thing, nor Uncircumciſion, but a new Creature. And as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God.* Amen.

Epheſians.

ST. *Paul* writ this Epiſtle when he was a Priſoner at *Rome*, about the Year of our Lord, *Fifty ſix*. It conſiſts of Two Parts. In the *firſt*, which is contained in the three firſt Chapters, he repreſents to the *Epheſians*, the Favour which God had ſhewed them, to receive them into his Covenant; them, I ſay, who for the moſt part were *Gentiles*. In the *ſecond*, he exhorts them to Holineſs, and inſtructs them in the principal Duties of the Chriſtian Life, as he does likewiſe in the three laſt Chapters.

CHAP. I.

I. THE Apoſtle returns Thanks to God for having choſen the *Epheſians* to Salvation, and for having given them the Knowledge of Chriſt, and the Bleſſings of the Holy Ghoſt. II. He prays the Lord to increaſe thoſe Lights and Gifts, and that He would give them the Grace rightly

rightly to comprehend the Excellency of their Vocation, and the Glory to which they were called in *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE beginning of this Epiſtle teaches us, I. That the greateſt Good that God ever ſhewed to Men was, to give them the Knowledge of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Hopes of Salvation. II. That the Spring of this great Favour, and all the ſpiritual Bleſſings we enjoy, is the ſole Mercy of God, who has vouchſafed to elect us to Salvation in his Son. III. That our Hearts ought to be affected by ſo precious a Kindneſs, and that we ſhould praiſe God continually for it, ſaying with St. *Paul*: *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Places in Chriſt.* IV. That the Deſign which God propoſed to Himſelf in thus chooſing and calling us to his Knowledge was, to render us holy and unreproveable before Him in Love; and that accordingly, Holineſs ought to be our chief Study, as it is the only Means of arriving at Glory. V. The Wiſhes and Prayers which St. *Paul* makes for the *Epheſians* teach us, that it is not ſufficient to have been once enlightened by the Goſpel, and to have had ſome Senſe of the Grace of God, but that we ſhould always go on increaſing in Good, for which purpoſe, we ought to pray to God, that He would manifeſt in us more and more the Power and Strength of his Grace. VI. And *Laſtly*, ſince all our Happineſs depends, as St. *Paul* has aſſured us in ſtrong Terms, in underſtanding rightly the Excellence of the divine Call, and of the good Things in Heaven, we ought continually to meditate upon them, and always to make

make this noble wiſh: *That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Glory, may give unto us the Spirit of Wiſdom, — to the End that the Eyes of our Underſtanding being enlighten'd, we may know the Hope of his Calling, and what are the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints.* Amen.

CHAP. II.

IN this Chapter the Apoſtle ſhews, I. That at the Time when all Men, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were dead in their Sins, God ſaved them by Jeſus Chriſt; and he obſerves particularly, that they were indebted for this great Benefit to the ſole Mercy of God, who had delivered them from ſuch their State of Condemnation and Corruption, and had given them the Capacity of doing good Works. II. He then repreſents to the *Epheſians*, who were formerly Heathens, and excluded from the Covenant of God, that the favour that God had ſhewn them, in removing the Diſtinction which was between them and the *Jews*, and in reuniting them ſo as to be no longer but one only People, and from thenceforwards, to compoſe all of them together but one only Houſe, and one only Temple devoted to the Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE are to conſider here, I. That all Men without exception, were naturally in Corruption and Condemnation, and Dead in their Sins; but that they are delivered from ſuch a diſmal State, and raiſed to the Hope of eternal Life through the great Mercy of God, and by the Death and Reſurrection of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. From whence it follows, that if we be ſaved, it is by the pure Bounty of God, and

and does not proceed from our ſelves. But this Doctrine ſhews us likewiſe, that the Deſign of God was to bring Men off from their Corruption, and to Sanctifie them; and that although we be not ſaved by Works, yet *God has created us unto Chriſt Jeſus into good Works, which he hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them*, as St. *Paul* ſays. II. We ſee in this Chapter, that the Diſtinction which there was formerly between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, is aboliſhed, ſince Chriſt has cauſed Salvation to be preached unto the *Gentiles*, who were out of his Covenant, as well as to the *Jews*. This Doctrine ſhould produce in us, who are derived from the Heathens, a profound acknowledgment of the Goodneſs of God, and make us *remember that we were in Time paſſed Gentiles in the Fleſh, —— having no Hope, and without God in the World: But now are made nigh by the Blood of Chriſt; ſo that we are no more Strangers, but fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God.* So great a Favour obliges us to great gratitude, and to live after a manner ſuitable to the Glory of our Condition, and to the happy State, in which it has pleaſed God to place us.

CHAP. III.

I. AFTER St. *Paul* had taught us in the foregoing Chapter, that the *Gentiles* compoſed but one People with the *Jews*, he tells the *Epheſians* that he was in Bonds, for having preached this Doctrine, which was formerly a hidden Myſtery, but was revealed to the Apoſtles by the Holy Ghoſt; and he exhorts the *Epheſians* not to be diſheartened at the Afflictions he endured, and which were ſo glorious to them as well as to him. II. He next beſeeches God to confirm them in his Calling,

to ſtrengthen them in Faith, Charity, and all kind of ſpiritual Gifts, and give them the Grace of knowing more and more the greatneſs and wonderfulneſs of the Love of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

SINCE St. *Paul* teaches us in this Chapter, that the Calling of the *Gentiles* was a Myſtery unknown before the Coming of *Chriſt*, we ſhould bleſs God with all our Heart, not only that we live in a Time, in which this Myſtery is manifeſted, but particularly that we are of thoſe Nations which were formerly in the Darkneſs of Idolatry, but which do now partake of the Promiſes of God by the Goſpel, inſomuch that we have at preſent acceſs to God by *Chriſt* with Confidence. Let us continually meditate upon ſo great a Mercy; Let us apply our ſelves to know truly, and be entirely ſenſible of the Extent of this wonderful Love of our Lord, to the End we may be thereby more and more excited to love Him, and aſpire to the Glory He has prepared for us; for which purpoſe let us beſeech Him with St. *Paul, to grant us, according to the Riches of his Glory, to be ſtrengthened with might, by his Spirit, in the inner Man; that Chriſt may dwell in our Hearts by Faith; that we being Rooted and Grounded in Love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Heigth, and to know the Love of Chriſt, which paſſeth Knowledge, that we may be filled with all the Fulneſs of God.* Amen.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV. 1,——16.

ST. *Paul* begins by exhorting the *Epheſians* to the Duties of a Chriſtian Life, recommending to them, before all Things, Peace and Concord. To induce them to it, he ſhews, I. That all Chriſtians enjoy in common the ſame ſpiritual Advantages. II. That the different Gifts which Chriſt has granted to Men, do all tend to the Edification of the Church. And, III. that it is chiefly in this View, that he eſtabliſhed, after aſcending into Heaven, divers Orders of Miniſters, and that the end of the Miniſtry was, to confirm Chriſtians in the Truth, and in Holineſs, and to guide them by theſe Means to Perfection and Salvation.

Reflexions after the Reading.

FROM this Chapter we may gather theſe three Inſtructions. I. That being all Members of the ſame Body, having all of us the ſame Faith, the ſame Hope, the ſame God, and the ſame Saviour, we ought to live in Peace and in perfect Unity. II. That ſince our Lord has diſtributed different Gifts to Men, and has particularly appointed, after his Aſcenſion, extraordinary Miniſters, ſuch as the Apoſtles; and ordinary Miniſters, ſuch as Paſtors and Teachers, we are bound to acknowledge the Neceſſity and Advantage of the Miniſtry, to make a right Uſe of it, and by its means to improve in Faith, in Piety, and Charity. III. The third Inſtruction is, that Chriſtians ſhould not be like wavering and fickle Children, nor give credit to all kinds of Doctrines, and to all that corrupt and deſigning Men may inſinuate into them; but that they ſhould be ſteady in

their Belief, and for that purpoſe, adhere inviolably to the Goſpel, and to the Doctrine of *Jeſus Chriſt*, which alone can lead them to Perfection and eternal Happineſs.

CHAP. IV. 17,——32.

ST. *Paul* exhorts the *Epheſians* not to live as they had done before their Converſion to Chriſtianity, and as the *Heathens* ſtill did; but to lead a Life entirely new, and conformable to the Precepts of the Goſpel of Chriſt. He warns them particularly to ſhun Impurity, and that Diſſoluteneſs to which the *Heathens* gave themſelves up; as they did likewiſe to Lying, Theft, Wrath, obſcene Diſcourſes, Slander, and all other ſinful Paſſions.

Reflexions after the Reading.

LET us improve theſe Exhortations which we have read, and learn from hence in general, that the Chriſtian Religion calls us to Holineſs, and that it is by no means allowed to Chriſtians, who have been inſtructed in the Truth by *Jeſus Chriſt*, to live like the *Gentiles*, that were involved in Ignorance, and that for want of knowing God, abandoned themſelves to all kinds of Diſorders. Let us therefore remember, that the Deſign of the Goſpel is, that *We put off the old Man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful Luſts.* —— *And that we put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs.* We ſee likewiſe beſides, what are the particular Sins which St. *Paul* condemns as altogether unworthy of Chriſtians. It is firſt, Impurity, and all kinds of Pollution; next, Lying and Deceiving, Injuſtice and Theft; Idleneſs, laſcivious and unhandſome

handſome Speeches, ſuch as ſcandalize our Neighbour, and grieve the Spirit of God; and laſtly, Anger, Bitterneſs, and Calumny. Let us avoid all theſe Sins; let us ſtudy Purity, Sincerity, Juſtice, and Meekneſs; to the end that we may bear the Image of our Heavenly Father, and that He may own us for the Diſciples of his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*. God grant us his Grace. *Amen.*

CHAP. V. 1,——21.

IN this Chapter we ſee, I. Exhortations to Charity and Purity. II. St. *Paul*, to diſſuade the *Epheſians* from Impurity, declares to them, that that Sin would draw down upon Men the Wrath of God; and he repreſents to them, that God had delivered them from the Darkneſs of *Paganiſm*, by enlightening them with the Light of the Goſpel. III. He adviſes them to behave with Prudence, to redeem the Time, and to avoid the Exceſs of Wine and prophane Mirth; and laſtly, exhorts them to ſpiritual Joy, and to Thankſgivings.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE are to learn here, I. That the Character of Children of God, which we bear, obliges us to imitate Him, eſpecially in his Love, and in his Goodneſs, and to walk in the Steps of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, who gave himſelf for us. II. That Chriſtians ought to have ſo much horror for Impurity, that it ſhould not be ſo much as named among them; that they ought never to pronounce any free or fooliſh Words, nor ſuch as are contrary to Modeſty; but that all their Diſcourſes ought to be grave and edifying. III. That thoſe who

ſuffer themſelves to be carried away by theſe Sins, bring upon themſelves the Wrath of God, and will have no part in his Kingdom. IV. That the light of the Goſpel, which has ſhined upon us, delivering us from the Darkneſs of Paganiſm, does not allow us to imitate the *Heathens* in their Diſorders, and that far from partaking of the Sins of the World, we are rather obliged to reprove them. V. That Chriſtians ought to govern themſelves with Wiſdom and Precaution, and to make a good Uſe of Time. And, Laſtly, that Intemperance and Drunkenneſs are moſt odious Vices, and ſhould never be admitted by Chriſtians; and that inſtead of abandoning our ſelves to Senſuality, and to carnal and profane Pleaſures, we ſhould ſeek after that ſpiritual Joy which the Holy Ghoſt produces, and which excites us to edifie one another, and to praiſe God continually in Heart and Mouth; *giving thanks always for all things, unto God, and the Father, in the Name of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt.

CHAP. V. 22,——33. And CHAP. VI. 1,——9.

ST. *Paul* preſcribes here, I. The Duties of Wives and Husbands. II. Thoſe of Children and Parents: And, III. Thoſe of Servants and Maſters.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Duties here preſcribed are very important, and abſolutely neceſſary for the Happineſs of Families and Edification of the Church. We ſee here, I. That Husbands and Wives ought to live together in perfect Harmony and Concord, ſince, as St. *Paul* ſays, the Union

Union between *Chriſt* and his Church, is a Type of that which ought to be between Married Perſons. The Duty of Husbands in particular, is to love their Wives, as Chriſt loved his Church; and that of Wives, is to honour their Husbands, and to be in Subjection to them, conſidering for that Purpoſe, that this Subjection is repreſented by that of the Church with reſpect to Chriſt. II. We ſee in the next Place, that Children are obliged, by the Command of God, to obey their Fathers and Mothers according to the Lord; and that Parents, on the other Hand, are bound to take care of their Children, eſpecially to Educate them in the Fear of God, and to keep them under his Diſcipline. III. As for Servants, their Condition engages them to obey their Maſters, and to ſerve them faithfully, whether abſent or preſent. On the other Hand, Maſters ſhould treat their Domeſticks with gentleneſs and equity, remembering that there is a Maſter in Heaven, to whom they are ſubject as well as their Servants, and who has no reſpect of Perſons. And they ought to conſider, Laſtly, that St. *Paul*'s intention was, that if Maſters ſhould have theſe charitable Conſiderations for their Servants, who in thoſe Times were moſtly *Gentiles*, and were Slaves beſides; Maſters are now-a-days much more obliged to perform the ſame Duties, ſince their Servants are free Perſons, and Chriſtians as well as themſelves. God grant us the Grace to diſcharge theſe mutual Duties, each of us according to our Condition and Calling.

CHAP. VI. 10,——24.

ST. *Paul* repreſents to the *Epheſians*, I. That ſince they were not only to fight againſt weak Men, but likewiſe againſt all that is Pow-

erful in the World, and even againſt their ſpiritual Enemies, and againſt the evil Angels; they ought to be cloathed and armed with Faith, Righteouſneſs, Hope, Prayer, and the Word of God, to the end that they may reſiſt and overcome their Enemies. II. He concludes this Epiſtle, by recommending himſelf to the Prayers of the *Epheſians*, and likewiſe by praying for them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we have read engages us to conſider, I. That our Condition in this Life, in which we are expoſed to divers Dangers, but eſpecially to our ſpiritual Enemies, and to the Temptations with which we are ſurrounded, obliges us to ſtand upon our Guard, to reſiſt thoſe Enemies, and to ſecure our ſelves from the Snares of the Devil. That for this purpoſe, we ought always to confirm and ſtrengthen our ſelves in Faith, in Truth, and in Hope; to read and meditate continually upon the Word of God, and to pray with Zeal and Perſeverance. That which is ſaid about the end of this Epiſtle, teaches us moreover that Chriſtians are obliged, by the Love they owe to *Jeſus Chriſt*, and for their own Intereſt, to pray for thoſe who preach the Word of God, and who labour to promote his Kingdom; and that Paſtors on their ſide, ought likewiſe to pray for their Flocks, and to put up the ſame Wiſhes in their behalf, as St. *Paul* did for the *Epheſians*, namely: *Peace be to the Brethren, and Love with Faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Chriſt in Sincerity.* Amen.

Philippians.

Philippians.

ST. *Paul* writ this Epiſtle, as well as the former, while he was a Priſoner at *Rome*, about the Year of Chriſt *Fifty ſix*, to thank the Chriſtians of the City of *Philippi* for the Aſſiſtance they had ſent him to *Rome* by *Epaphroditus*, one of their Paſtors. He informs them of his Condition, and gives them ſeveral Exhortations.

CHAP. I.

I. ST. *Paul* begins by Thankſgivings and Prayers, which he makes for the Confirmation of the *Philippians* in Faith and Holineſs. II. He tells them that his Impriſonment had contributed towards promoting the Goſpel in the City of *Rome*. III. He declares he was diſpoſed to glorifie Chriſt, whether by Life or Death, and that he only deſired to live for the Advantage

tage of the Church. IV. He exhorts the *Philippians* to a Behaviour worthy of the Goſpel, and to Patience in Afflictions.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE ſee from the very Entrance of this Epiſtle, by the Wiſhes and Prayers which the Apoſtle offers up to God for the *Philippians*, and by the Proofs he gives them of his Love, the great Zeal and perfect Charity with which he abounded. This is a Leſſon to Paſtors, to love their Flocks with a cordial Affection in *Chriſt Jeſus*, and to pray to God inceſſantly for the entire Sanctification of the Faithful. II. We ought to admire the Ways of Providence, which was pleaſed that St. *Paul* ſhould be impriſoned at *Rome*, to the end that he might have an opportunity to preach the Goſpel there, and that his Suffering might ſerve to excite the Zeal of many Perſons: 'Tis thus, that what the Enemies of the Truth do to deſtroy it, helps often to ſpread it the more. III. We ſee that tho' there were People who preached the Goſpel out of Envy and Jealouſie, with reſpect to St. *Paul*, yet he rejoiced becauſe the Goſpel was thereby promoted. God ſometimes makes uſe even of Perſons who do not act upon a good Principle, to perform his Work; but however it be done, thoſe who, like St. *Paul*, are animated with a true Zeal, are pleaſed with it, even tho' it be a Prejudice to themſelves. IV. The Sentiments of this Apoſtle concerning Life and Death, are ſuch as all Chriſtians ought to entertain; who ſhould always be ready both to live and to die for the Glory of God; their Deſire is to leave the World, that they may be with the Lord; and if they wiſh to live, it is only that they may be uſeful to the Church, and

to

to their Neighbours. *Finally*, This Place of the Epiſtle to the *Philippians* proves clearly, that the Faithful are happy with the Lord after their Death, and waiting for the Reſurrection. V. The Cloſe of this Chapter ſhews, that the Duty of all Chriſtians is, to behave after a manner worthy of the Goſpel, and not to be moved at Afflictions, eſpecially when they undergo them for the ſake of Chriſt.

CHAP. II. 1,——13.

I. ST. *Paul* exhorts the *Philippians* very affectionately, to Concord and Humility. II. To which end he propoſes the Example of Chriſt's Humiliation, and of the Glory to which he was afterwards exalted. And, III. He repreſents to them, that this is an inducement to labour for their Salvation with Humility and Perſeverance.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn from hence, I. That one of the moſt important Duties of Religion is, that Chriſtians ſhould be animated with true Charity; that they ſhould live together in perfect Unity, and in a Spirit of Humility, and that they ſhould promote the Intereſts of others as well as their own. II. St. *Paul* ſets here before our Eyes the profound Humiliation of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who, tho' he was equal to God, abaſed himſelf, even to the Death of the Croſs, and who by his Obedience and Sufferings was exalted to ſupream Glory. The Apoſtle propoſes us this Example, to teach us, that if we have the ſame Sentiments as our Saviour had, we ſhall likewiſe attain to Glory. III. This ſerious Exhortation, *Work out your own*

own Salvation with fear and trembling, ſhould inſpire us all with a great Zeal, to labour continually in the Work of our Salvation; making uſe for that purpoſe, of the Means which God offers to us, among which, one of the moſt effectual is, to have recourſe to Him by Prayer, foraſmuch as it is *God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.*

CHAP. II. 14,——30.

I. ST. *Paul* exhorts the *Philippians* to live in Peace, and by a pure and innocent Behaviour, to edifie thoſe among whom they lived; and he aſſures them he would ſuffer Death with joy, if it were neceſſary for the Confirmation of their Faith. II. He promiſes to ſend *Timothy* to them, whoſe Zeal and Faithfulneſs he praiſes. He likewiſe recommends to them *Epaphroditus*, who was going back to them after recovering from a great Sickneſs.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may here make three Reflexions. I. That Chriſtians ought to avoid Quarrels and Diſputes, and diſtinguiſh themſelves by an unblameable Behaviour, ſo that they may ſhine like burning Lights in a crooked and perverſe Generation. II. St. *Paul*'s Declaration, that he was ready to ſacrifice his Blood and his Life with Pleaſure, for the Edification of the *Philippians*, ſhews, that the true Miniſters of Chriſt are entirely devoted to the Service of God and of his Church; that this is the end of all their Labours; and that when it is neceſſary to loſe even their Lives for the Advancement of the Salvation of Men, they ought to lay them down with gladneſs. III. The Teſtimony which

which the Apoſtle gives of the Sincerity and great Zeal of *Timothy*; what he ſays of *Epaphroditus*, of his Sickneſs and Recovery, and the earneſt manner in which he recommends him to the *Philippians*, ſhews, that true Paſtors, and ſuch as only ſeek the Intereſts of Chriſt, and who diſcharge their Function with Zeal and Sincerity, deſerve all the Love, and all the Eſteem of Chriſtians; that the Life and Converſation of ſuch ought to be very dear to the Church, that they ought to be received with all Demonſtrations of Joy, and to be highly eſteemed by their People, who ſhould ſubmit to their Inſtructions and Exhortations.

CHAP. III.

I. ST. *Paul* adviſes the *Philippians* not to hearken to falſe Doctors, who preached up the Obſervation of the Circumciſion, and boaſted of the external Advantages that diſtinguiſh'd the *Jews* from other Nations. II. He ſhews by his Example, that all thoſe Advantages were unprofitable, and even prejudicial to Salvation; and he ſays, that it was for that reaſon he had renounced them, to adhere to Chriſt alone; and that he continually endeavour'd to advance more and more in the Knowledge of our Lord, and to attain to Perfection. III. He exhorts the *Philippians* to come into his Sentiments, and to avoid their falſe Teachers, whoſe Character he deſcribes, by ſaying, that they were carnal Men; whereas true Chriſtians are ſpiritual Men, and do only aim at Heaven.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE are to obſerve in general in this whole Chapter, that as St. *Paul* exhorted the *Philippians* to beware of falſe Teachers, who endeavour'd to enſlave them to the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moſes*, it is very neceſſary that Chriſtians ſhould fortifie themſelves againſt Error, and all that is contrary to the Purity of Faith. Beſides which, we may gather from this Chapter, that true Chriſtians are diſtinguiſhable by theſe three Tokens. I. The *firſt* is, that they have the ſame Opinions of the Things of the World, as St. *Paul* had for the external Advantages he poſſeſs'd, when he was a *Jew*; that is to ſay, that they do not at all value thoſe Things in compariſon of the Excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt their Lord, and that they conſider them even as hurtful, when they hinder them from following their Call. II. The *ſecond* Character of true Chriſtians is, that in imitation of St. *Paul*, they aim at Perfection, leaving the Things which are behind them, advancing towards thoſe before them, and by continual endeavours aſpiring to the Mark and Prize of their Calling in *Chriſt Jeſus*. III. The *third* Token of the Faithful is, that whereas carnal Men do only love the Things of the World, and have no other God but their Belly; true Chriſtians live after a ſpiritual and heavenly manner, behaving themſelves as thoſe whoſe Country is Heaven, from whence they expect their Lord and Saviour, who will come from thence to raiſe them up, and to receive them into the Glory of his Kingdom.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

THIS Chapter conſiſts of two Parts. I. The firſt contains Exhortations to Perſeverance, Unity, and ſpiritual Joy; to Truſt in God, and to a holy Life. II. In the ſecond, St. *Paul* thanks the *Philippians* for the Contributions they had ſent him for his Subſiſtence in Priſon; and prays for them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt Part of this Chapter inſtructs us in theſe *five* Duties. The *firſt* is, to perſevere continually in the Pureneſs of Faith, and in Piety. The *ſecond*, To live in Unity with each other, and above all, to be of the ſame Opinion in matters of Religion. The *third*, To rejoice always in God with a ſpiritual Joy. The *fourth*, Not to be full of the Cares of this Life, but to have recourſe to God by Prayer in all our Wants, and to truſt his Providence. The *fifth* Duty is of a very great Extent; it is to adhere conſtantly to all Things that are honeſt, pure, holy, virtuous, and praiſe-worthy. II. There may likewiſe be two Reflexions made upon the ſecond Part of this Chapter. *Firſt*, St. *Paul* teaches us here, by his Example, to be content in whatever State and Condition we find our ſelves, whether we be in Poverty, or whether we be in Plenty. *Secondly*, The Thanks which this Apoſtle returns the *Philippians* for what they had ſent him, ſhews a great Diſintereſtedneſs, and at the ſame time no leſs Gratitude; and the Prayers he offers to God for them upon that Occaſion teach us, that it is a Work very

very agreeable to God, to assist such as are in Want, and particularly the Servants of God, and those that suffer for the Gospel; that these Works of Charity rejoice and comfort good Men, and that they are Sacrifices of a sweet Odour, which God accepts, and which He rewards, according to the Riches of his Grace, with Glory in *Jesus Christ*.

Coloſſians.

THIS is likewiſe an Epiſtle which St. *Paul* writ whilſt he was a Priſoner at *Rome* the firſt Time. The Deſign of it, is to Exhort the *Coloſſians*, not to ſuffer themſelves to be ſeduced by certain falſe Teachers, who would perſwade them to joyn the *Jewiſh* Ceremonies to the Chriſtian Faith. This is the Subject of the Two firſt Chapters. In the Two laſt, he preſcribes the principal Duty of Piety and Holineſs.

CHAP. I.

THIS Chapter conſiſts of two Parts. I. St. *Paul* praiſes God that the Goſpel had been preached to the *Coloſſians*, and for the great Fruits it had produced among them; and he beſeeches the Lord to fill them more and more with the Knowledge of his Will, and with all kinds of ſpiritual Gifts, to the End that they may behave in a Manner worthy of the Lord.

II. The Apoſtle repreſents, that *Chriſt* is the only Fountain of Salvation, that in Him the Fulneſs of the God-head dwells, that Mankind, and the *Gentiles* eſpecially, had been perfectly reconciled to God by his Means. St. *Paul* ſpeaks thus to the *Coloſſians*, to convince them that the Doctrine of *Chriſt* was ſufficient for Salvation, without any neceſſity of Stopping at the Law of *Moſes*, and that the Sufferings which he himſelf endured, as well as thoſe which they might likewiſe be expoſed to, ought not to move them in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Thankſgivings with which St. *Paul* begins this Epiſtle, engage us continually to praiſe God for having cauſed the Goſpel to be preached to us, and by this Means for *delivering us from the Power of Darkneſs, and tranſlating us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.* The Prayers St. *Paul* joyns to theſe Thankſgivings teach us, that it is not enough to have received the Faith in ſome degree only, but that we ought to aim at perfection, and to beg of God that He would continually increaſe his Knowledge, and the Gifts of his Spirit in us. Theſe Prayers of the Apoſtle inſtruct us farther, that the Purpoſe for which God grants us this Knowledge is, that we ſhould govern ourſelves after a Manner worthy of the Lord, that we ſhould endeavour to pleaſe Him entirely, and bring forth the Fruits of all ſort of good Works. II. We ſee in the ſecond Part of this Chapter, that *Chriſt* is the only Author of Salvation, that the Fulneſs of the God-head dwells in Him, that he is very God and very Man, and that it is by Him, that God has been pleaſed to reconcile all Men to Himſelf. What we are to gather

ther from hence is, that we are only to ſeek for Salvation in *Chriſt Jeſus*, by continually perſevering in Faith and Obedience to the Goſpel, and that no Temptation whatever ſhould be able to turn us away from it.

CHAP. II.

I. ST. *Paul* teſtifies to the *Coloſſians*, that the Fear he was under, leaſt they ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be drawn away, by thoſe who endeavour'd to introduce the Subtilties of Philoſophy, and the Traditions of the *Jews*, into the Chriſtian Religion, obliged him to make Uſe of theſe Exhortations. II. For this reaſon he continues to repreſent to them, that in *Chriſt Jeſus* every thing was found that was neceſſary to juſtifie and ſanctifie Men, and conſequently, that the Ceremonies of the *Jews* were uſeleſs, and had been aboliſhed by the Death of Chriſt. III. He concludes from thence, that Chriſtians are no longer bound to obſerve theſe Ceremonies, and that they ought not to liſten to thoſe who would reſtrain them to a Diſtinction of Meats and Days, to the Worſhip of Angels, and to ſeveral Vain and Superſtitious Practices.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE great Zeal St. *Paul* ſhews at the beginning of this Chapter for the *Coloſſians*, and his Apprehenſions of their being ſeduced by falſe Doctors, teaches us, I. That the Miniſters of the Goſpel ought carefully to ſecure their Flocks from Error and Seduction; and that Chriſtians ought themſelves to ſtand upon their Guard, and to beware that they be not diverted from the pure Faith, by the Subtilties or Doctrines invented by Men. II. We

ſee here, that the true Means of preventing ſuch Seduction, is to ſtick to *Chriſt* only, and to his Goſpel, and to look upon Him as one that has perfectly attoned for our Sins, and in whom we find all that is neceſſary to our Salvation. III. It ought to be obſerved, that when St. *Paul* ſays, that *Chriſt* has by his Death done away the Obligations that were againſt us, and which conſiſted in the Legal ordinances, having entirely aboliſht them, this only relates to Circumciſion and the Ceremonies which God had formerly preſcribed to the *Jews*; but that He has not freed us from the Obligation of keeping the Commandments of God; that, on the contrary, He dy'd to enable us to obſerve them better, and to communicate his Grace to us after a much more perfect Manner than the *Moſaical* Ceremonies were able to do. Laſtly, We learn from this Chapter, that it is a very dangerous thing to introduce voluntary Worſhips, and ſuch as are invented by Men, and vain and ſuperſtitious Cuſtoms, though they even carry with them ſome Appearance of Devotion into our holy Religion; but that we ſhould always confine our ſelves to the Goſpel, and adhere to that true and ſolid Piety which is there preſcribed, and which conſiſts in a pure Faith, and in a Renunciation of the World, of Sin, and of the Deſires of the Fleſh.

CHAP. III. and IV. *v.* 1.

I. ST. *Paul* ſhews that Faith in Chriſt raiſed from the Dead, engages Chriſtians to ſeek for the Things of Heaven, and to renounce thoſe Sins that reigned among the Gentiles, and particularly Uncleanneſs. II. He exhorts them next to Goodneſs, Humility, mutual Pardon,

don, Charity, Peace, and to glorifie God by their Speeches, by their Praiſes, and by their whole Behaviour. III. He ſhews, laſtly, the Duties of Wives and Husbands, of Children and Parents, of Servants and Maſters.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE have ſeen the Duties to which this Chapter engages us. I. St. *Paul* ſhews here in general, that if we truly believe that *Chriſt* is riſen, and that He ſits on the right Hand of God, we ſhall not ſet our Hearts upon Worldly things, but ſhall conceive a great Affection for the Things of Heaven. II. The Apoſtle ſpecifies next, the Things which Chriſtianity obliges to renounce: ſuch as firſt, all kind of Impurity and Pollutions, whether in Actions or Deſires; and Secondly, Wrath, Calumny, diſhoneſt Speeches, Lying, and in general, all the Vices of corrupt Nature. He ſhews the Virtues and principal Duties of the Chriſtian Life, which are to abound in Mercy, Goodneſs, Meekneſs and Humility, to bear with, and pardon one another, to be very Charitable, to edifie by good Diſcourſes, to be continually rendring Thanks to God our Father, and ſo to behave our ſelves, that all our Words and all our Actions may tend to his Glory. III. With theſe general Duties St. *Paul* recites the particular ones, to which Wives and Husbands, Children and Parents, Servants and Maſters, are mutually obliged. 'Tis for us to practiſe all theſe Precepts, which are ſo Juſt, and ſo Worthy the Religion we profeſs, and to diſcharge all theſe Duties, whether in our general Calling, as Chriſtians, or whether in the particular State and Condition in which God has placed us.

CHAP. IV.

I. THE Apoſtle exhorts the *Coloſſians* to perſevere in Piety, and to behave wiſely, and to ſpeak with Prudence and Meekneſs upon all Occaſions. II. He recommends *Tychicus* and *Oneſimus*, whom he ſent to them, and concludes his Epiſtle by Salutations and ſome Advices.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter engages us to the Three following Duties: I. To pray continually; to perſevere in that holy Exerciſe, and in Thankſgivings, and particularly, to pray for the Miniſters of *Jeſus Chriſt*, to the End that they may Preach the Goſpel after ſuch manner as it ought to be Preached. II. The ſecond Duty, is to be very Prudent, and to redeem the Time, eſpecially when we have to do with Perſons who have an Averſion to Truth and Holineſs; to diſcourſe always with Wiſdom and Gentleneſs, and after ſuch a Manner as is moſt proper for Edification; and to avoid every thing that may expoſe us to Danger, without neceſſity, or give Offence to any one whatever. Laſtly, The good Character St. *Paul* gives *Tychicus*, *Oneſimus*, *Mark*, *Jeſus*, *Epaphras*, and St. *Luke*, who were all of 'em excellent Servants of God, and the Manner in which he recommends them to the *Coloſſians*, is a Leſſon to all Chriſtians, to ſhew great Love to the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt*, who ought to be received by the Church with all kind of Reſpect and Affection.

I. *Theſſalonians.*

IT is thought that this Epiſtle is the oldeſt of all, it having been writ by St. *Paul* in the *Fiftieth* Year of Chriſt. In the three firſt Chapters, the Apoſtle ſignifies how much he had been rejoiced to hear of the good State of the *Theſſalonians*, and their Steadineſs in Perſecutions. He likewiſe informs them of his Condition. In the two laſt, he exhorts them to Piety and Holineſs.

CHAP. I.

ST. *Paul* praiſes God, I. That the *Theſſalonians* had received the Goſpel with Faith and Zeal. And, II. That their Church was a Pattern to all the Churches of *Macedonia* and *Achaia*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Satisfaction and Gladneſs with which St. *Paul* was affected at the happy State of the *Theſſalonians*, and at the Account he had received of their Faith, Charity, and Patience, and the Thanks he renders to God for it, ſhew, that what chiefly recommends Churches is, when Faith, and all kind of Virtues, flouriſh therein, and that this is likewiſe the greateſt ſubject of Joy and Comfort to the faithful Servants of God. For which purpoſe, the Church of *Theſſalonica*, which was formerly an Example to the reſt, may be propoſed for a Pattern to all Chriſtian Churches. We ſhould likewiſe apply to our ſelves what St. *Paul* ſaid to the *Theſſalonians*, touching their Converſion to the Chriſtian Religion; ſince, like them, we alſo, through the Mercy of God, have been delivered from the Darkneſs of Heatheniſm, and *are turned to God from Idols, to ſerve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from Heaven, whom He raiſed from the Dead, even* JESUS, *which deliver'd us from the Wrath to come.*

CHAP. II.

ST. *Paul* does three Things in this Chapter. I. He puts the *Theſſalonians* in Mind, that he had preached the Goſpel to them with ſincerity, and without any view of Intereſt; that to the end he might not be burthenſome to them, he had ſupported himſelf by his own labour, and that he had always exhorted them to live after ſuch a manner as was worthy of that God, who had called them. II. He bleſſes God for having made his Miniſtry effectual among them, and for their having undergone with ſo much Con-

Conſtancy the Perſecutions which at that time were every where raiſed againſt the Chriſtians by the *Jews*, whoſe hatred of the Goſpel he here deſcribes. III. He ſhews the Deſire he had to ſee the *Theſſalonians*, and the ardent Affection he bore them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Miniſters of the Goſpel ſhould learn by St. *Paul*'s Example, to exerciſe their Office with Integrity; to preach the pure Word of God without any Motives of Intereſt or Vain-glory; to make appear in all their Actions an entire Diſintereſtedneſs, and a perfect Meekneſs; to behave themſelves piouſly and without reproach, and continually to exhort Chriſtians to a Conduct worthy of God, who calls them to his Kingdom, and to his Glory. II. We ſee in this Chapter, that the Duty of thoſe to whom the Word of God is preach'd, is to receive it, not as the Word of Man, but as the divine Word; and not to be diſcouraged at Perſecutions and Gainſayings, to which they might be expoſed; but to ſuffer them with the ſame Conſtancy as St. *Paul* and the *Theſſalonians* endured thoſe which the *Jews* had raiſed againſt them. III. What is here ſaid, that the *Jews* were the open Enemies of the Goſpel, and that they fulfilled the Meaſure of their Crimes, ſhould make us deplore the Infidelity of that Nation, which continues even till now; and likewiſe induce us to pray for their Converſion. We ſee moreover hereby, that there have been in all Times Perſons that ſet themſelves againſt the Goſpel, and therefore we muſt not be ſurpriſed if we find the like among the Chriſtians of theſe latter Ages. The laſt Verſes of this Chapter, in which St. *Paul* tells

tells us, that the *Theſſalonians* were his Joy before the Lord, ſhews how ſenſible and tender that Affection is, which Paſtors ought to conceive for their Flocks; from whence we may gather, that there is no Joy comparable to that which true Miniſters feel when they ſee the Fruits of their Miniſtry; and that as the Faithful are all their Hope, and all their Joy, they will alſo be their Crown of Glory at the Coming of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*.

CHAP. III.

THERE is ſpoken in this Chapter, I. Of the Care St. *Paul* took of ſending *Timothy* from *Athens* to *Theſſalonica*, to inform himſelf of the Condition of the *Theſſalonians*, and to ſtrengthen them. II. Of the great Comfort the Apoſtle received from the good News which *Timothy* brought him; upon which occaſion he makes very fervent Wiſhes for them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE great Concern St. *Paul* had for the Church of *Theſſalonica*, and the Care he took to ſend *Timothy* to comfort and confirm the Chriſtians of that City, ſhews, that Paſtors ought to be continually employed about the Wants of their Flocks, and to provide for their Edification by all poſſible Means. II. The Comfort St. *Paul* felt in being informed by *Timothy* of the Perſeverance of the *Theſſalonians* in Faith and Holineſs, and the Thanks he renders to God upon the ſame Account in this Chapter, is a Proof that nothing more ſenſibly affects the faithful Servants of *Jeſus Chriſt*, nor gives them greater Pleaſure, than when they ſee the good State of thoſe o-

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ver whom God has appointed them, and that this ought to be the principal Subject of their Prayers and Thankſgivings. This is alſo what we ſhould do with the utmoſt Zeal we can for our own Salvation, and for the Advancement of the Glory of God, as well as for the Conſolation of our Guides, who ask the like Favour of God on our behalf, in the following Words of St. *Paul*: *The Lord make you to increaſe and abound in Love one towards another, and towards all Men, even as we do towards you; to the end He may ſtabliſh your Hearts unblameable in Holineſs before God even our Father, at the Coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all his Saints.*

CHAP. IV.

THERE are two Things to be obſerved in this Chapter. I. Exhortations to a holy Life, and eſpecially to Chaſtity and Charity. II. St. *Paul* ſhews, that Chriſtians ought not to grieve exceſſively for the Dead; and in this View, he ſpeaks of what ſhall happen both to the Dead and Living at the laſt Day, and how they ſhall be taken up into Heaven.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. *Paul* teaches us in this Chapter, I. That the chief Duty of Chriſtians is, to behave themſelves in ſuch a manner as is agreeable to God, to keep the Commandments we have received from our Lord, and to abound more and more in Piety. II. That the Will of God is, that we ſhould be holy, that we ſhould avoid Impurity, and evil Concupiſcence, that every one ſhould know how to keep his Body in Chaſtity, that no Body ought to violate the Rules of Modeſty, of Charity, and of Juſtice, to gratifie

tifie the inordinate Deſires of the Fleſh; that God is the Avenger of thoſe Sins, and that they are unworthy of us, ſince God has not called us to Uncleanneſs, but to Holineſs. St. *Paul* teaches us, III. That true Chriſtians do not want to be exhorted to Charity, ſince they are taught by God to love one another; and to the end that we may exerciſe Charity, every one ought to keep within the Bounds of his Calling, to apply himſelf to his own Buſineſs, and to avoid Idleneſs and Curioſity. *Laſtly*, We ſee in this Chapter, that we ought not to afflict our ſelves for the Dead, *as Men without Hope*, ſince we know that thoſe who die in the Lord, ſhall riſe again to be carried up into Heaven upon the Clouds, in order to meet Him, together with thoſe who ſhall be then alive. This Doctrine ought to comfort us for the Death of ſuch Perſons as are dear to us, to confirm our ſelves againſt the Fear of Death, and to excite us to live to the Lord, to the end, that dying likewiſe to Him, we may be raiſed again one Day, and render'd partakers of the heavenly Glory. May Chriſt himſelf grant us this Grace. *Amen.*

CHAP. V.

ST. *Paul* does three Things in this Chapter. I. He ſpeaks of the laſt Coming of Chriſt, and exhorts the Chriſtians to prepare themſelves for it, by Sobriety and Watchfulneſs. II. He preſcribes to the *Theſſalonians* ſeveral Duties of Piety. III. He concludes his Epiſtle, by praying God for their Sanctification, and recommending himſelf to their Prayers.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter teaches us, I. That the Day of the Lord will come in a very ſudden Manner, ſurprizing Men when they leaſt expect it; that it will be a Day of Terror for thoſe who walk in Darkneſs, and give themſelves up to the Works of the Fleſh; but that the ſame Day will be very comfortable to Believers; and that therefore the Way not to be ſurpriſed by it is, to prepare ourſelves for it by a ſober Life, by Faith, by the Practice of Charity, and all kind of good Works. II. St. *Paul* does next preſcribe ſeveral particular Duties, ſuch as the edifying and exhorting one another by good Diſcourſes; honouring Paſtors, and ſhewing great Love for them; living in Peace among our ſelves; adviſing, comforting, and forbearing each other; avoiding Revenge; rejoycing always with ſpiritual Joy; praying continually; giving Thanks to God in all Things; not quenching the Gifts of the Spirit, neither in others nor in our ſelves; Trying all Things, and retaining that which is Good; and Laſtly, avoiding all Appearance of Evil. All theſe Duties are abſolutely Neceſſary: Let us therefore practiſe them, and let us for that Purpoſe beſeech *the God of Peace to Sanctifie our whole Spirit, and Soul and Body, and preſerve them blameleſs unto the Coming of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt.

II. *Theſſalonians.*

THIS Epiſtle was writ a little after the former, about the Year of Chriſt *Fifty one*. It conſiſts of three Chapters. In the I. St. *Paul* encourages the *Theſſalonians* againſt Perſecution. In the II. He undeceives them concerning the Approach of the laſt Day. And in the III. He exhorts them to live according to the Purity of the Goſpel.

CHAP. I.

THESE are the Contents of the firſt Chapter. I. St. *Paul* gives Thanks to God, that the Faith and Charity of the *Theſſalonians* increaſed more and more, and that they perſevered in the midſt of the Perſecutions they ſuffer'd. II. He aſſures them, that God will not fail to puniſh Perſecutors, and thoſe who did not obey the Goſpel, and that He would crown the Faithful with everlaſting Glory at the Coming

Coming of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. III. He beſeeches God to confirm the *Theſſalonians*, and to make 'em increaſe in Faith and Holineſs.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE continue to ſee in this Epiſtle, that the Church of *Theſſalonica* did more and more abound in Faith, Charity, and the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt; that St. *Paul* had a very particular Kindneſs for this Church, and was the Subject of his Joy and Thankſgivings; upon which Account the *Theſſalonians* ought to be a Pattern to all Chriſtians in every Age. II. This Chapter teaches us, that Chriſtians, far from being diſcouraged by thoſe Afflictions, to which the Profeſſion of the Goſpel expoſes them, are thereby better qualified to enter into the Kingdom of God; that ſuch Afflictions are a Proof of his righteous Judgment, and that the Lord will come to give reſt and eaſe to ſuch as have undergone them, and to exerciſe Vengeance againſt Perſecutors, and all thoſe who obey not the Goſpel of *Chriſt*. This Doctrine ought to produce in us Patience and Joy in our Afflictions, as well as a lively fear of the Judgment of God, and conſtant Endeavours of pleaſing Him. III. The Prayer St. *Paul* makes for the Confirmation of the *Theſſalonians*, in Faith and the Grace of God, ſhews that we muſt perſevere in Good, and aim more and more at Perfection. This is what the Apoſtle exhorts us all to do in the following Words: *We pray always for you, that our God would count you Worthy of this Calling, and fulfil the good Pleaſure of his Goodneſs, and the Works of Faith with Power; that the Name of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt *may be glorified*

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n you, and ye in Him, according to the Grace of our God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

CHAP. II.

I. ST. *Paul*, that he might undeceive the *Theſſalonians*, in the Opinion they had entertained, that the Day of the Lord would ſoon happen, foretels that before the Coming of that Day, there would be an Apoſtacy in the Church, occaſioned by the Man of Sin, and the Son of Perdition; concerning whom he deſcribes the Characters, the Place, the Time, the Manner of his Manifeſtation, the Progreſs he would make, and Laſtly, his Deſtruction. II. The Apoſtle adds Exhortations and Prayers in Favour of the *Theſſalonians*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Prophecy contained in this Chapter deſerves our greateſt Notice. St. *Paul* here foretels that there would happen an almoſt general Defection in the Church, which was likewiſe ſhewn by the other Apoſtles; the Accompliſhment of this Prophecy appeared in that which happened ſome Time after the Death of the Apoſtles; Ignorance, Error, Corruption, Tyranny, Idolatry, and all kinds of Superſtitions and Diſorders being brought into the Church, and having reigned therein for ſeveral Ages; but this Prophecy does likewiſe ſhew, that ſuch Tyranny of *Antichriſt* and Corruption ſhould not laſt always, and that the Lord would aboliſh it, by his infinite Power. This has already happened in Part, and will be one Day wholly compleated. God was pleaſed that this event ſhould be foretold, to the End that we ſhould not be ſurprized

prized at it, and the Faithful ſhould be upon their Guard. It muſt likewiſe be obſerved, after St. *Paul*, that if there have been ſome People, and if there be ſtill ſome, who have ſuffered themſelves to be led away by Error, it is an Effect of the juſt Judgment of God, becauſe they did not Love the Truth, and becauſe they took Pleaſure in Vice; but thoſe whom God has delivered from Error, and whom He has enlightened with the pure Light of the Goſpel, ought *to give Him Thanks, becauſe he has from the Beginning choſen them to Salvation, and to the Obtaining of the Glory of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt; *wherefore let us Stand faſt in the Doctrine we have received, and let us pray the Lord to ſanctifie us entirely, and to eſtabliſh us in every good Word and Work.*

CHAP. III.

I. ST. *Paul* exhorts the *Theſſalonians* to pray for him, and for the Progreſs of the Goſpel, and he alſo Prays for them. II. He orders them to depart from thoſe who lead a wicked Life, and to have no Communication with them; and he blames thoſe particularly that lived in Idleneſs. III. He concludes his Epiſtle with Wiſhes and Prayers for the Faithful of *Theſſalonica*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THERE are three chief Reflexions to be made in this Chapter. I. The firſt is, that the Zeal for the Glory of God obliges all Chriſtians to pray for the Propagation of the Goſpel, and for thoſe Faithful Miniſters that Preach it, who, on their Part, ought likewiſe to pray for the Church and all its Members. II.

The ſecond is, that if there be any People in the Church, who lead a diſorderly Life, and do not behave themſelves according to the Commands of our Saviour, we ought not to conſider them as our Brethren, but avoid their Converſation. This is what St. *Paul* expreſsly orders in the Name of *Chriſt*, and what is enjoyned in ſeveral Places of the New Teſtament. Whereby it appears, that Paſtors are obliged to exerciſe Diſcipline, and to excommunicate ſcandalous Sinners, and that the reſt of the Members of the Church ought likewiſe to ſhun their Company. III. We learn from hence, that thoſe who, inſtead of employing themſelves, and labouring in lawful Buſineſs, ſpend their Lives in Idleneſs, in Curioſity, and frivolous Actions, leading a Life wholly unworthy of Chriſtians, do not deſerve even to live, ſince the Apoſtle has expreſly declared, *that if any would not Work, neither ſhould he Eat.*

I. *Timothy.*



T. *Paul* writ this Epiſtle in the Year of our Lord *Fifty two*, to *Timothy*, whom he had left at *Epheſus*, to take care of the Church of that City. His Deſign was to exhort *Timothy* to withſtand the falſe Teachers; and to inſtruct him how Biſhops and Paſtors ought to govern the Church of God.

CHAP. I.

I. IN this Chapter, the Apoſtle orders *Timothy* to hinder certain Jewiſh Doctors from teaching a Doctrine different from that of the Goſpel, and introducing Diſputes in the Church. II. And becauſe theſe Doctors ſhewed great Zeal for the Law, he informs him what is the true Uſe thereof. III. This gives him a handle to make mention of the Favour God had done him, in calling him to the

Office of an Apoſtle, and in general, of the Mercy of God towards Sinners. IV. And *Laſtly*, He exhorts *Timothy* to perform the Duties of his Function with Courage.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Inſtructions contained in this Chapter are the following. I. That the Duty of Miniſters is, to teach and preſerve the pure Doctrine, and to oppoſe ſuch as would alter it, by teaching falſe or vain Doctrines, and that are only proper to raiſe Diſputes and Troubles in the Church. II. That *the end of the Commandment is Charity*, ſuch as proceeds *out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conſcience, and of Faith unfeigned.* And that thoſe who turn away from this End, loſe themſelves in uſeleſs Diſcourſes. III. That the Law, which forbids the groſſeſt Crimes, was not properly given to good Men, who have an abhorrence for the ſame; from whence it follows, that though it be not aboliſhed, there is no longer the ſame Uſe for it, in reſpect to Chriſtians, as formerly, ſince the Goſpel requires a more perfect Holineſs from Men, and that they ſhould obey God out of a Principle of Love. IV. St. *Paul* teaches us here, *that Chriſt Jeſus came into the World to ſave Sinners*, which he confirms by his own Example. This is a Doctrine full of Comfort for thoſe Sinners that are truly Penitent. Upon which, what St. *Paul* ſays here, does well deſerve our notice, namely, That God had ſhewn him Mercy, becauſe in Perſecuting the Church, he had done it through Ignorance and Unbelief. We may learn from hence, that it is more eaſie to obtain Pardon for thoſe Sins, that are committed through Ignorance, than thoſe that are committed wilfully, and contrary to the Knowledge we have of the

Will

Will of God. Laſtly, We ſee in this Chapter, that our chiefeſt Care ought to be, to have a good Conſcience, ſince in loſing that, we loſe the Faith, and fall into the utmoſt Obdurateneſs.

CHAP. II.

I. THE Apoſtle directs that Prayer ſhould be made in the Church for all Men, and particularly for Kings and Magiſtrates, tho' at that Time they were Heathens; and he builds this Order upon the Will of God, that all Men ſhall be ſaved, and that it was for that purpoſe He ſent his Son into the World. II. He ſays, that Men ought to pray in a Spirit of Peace and Purity; and that Women ſhould aſſiſt at the Aſſemblies of the Church in modeſt Apparel, and continue in reſpect and ſilence.

Reflexions after the Reading.

FROM this Chapter we learn, I. That it is a very neceſſary Duty in Religion, to make publick Prayers for the Salvation of all Men, and particularly for Kings, and thoſe that are ſet in Authority. II. That the Goodneſs of God towards Men is ſo great, that He deſires that all ſhould be ſaved, for which end, he has given his Son *Chriſt Jeſus* to be a Mediator between God and Men. III. That no Prayers can be acceptable to God, that do not proceed from a pure Heart, and from a Spirit of Charity and Peace, free from Wrath and Litigiouſneſs. I. Beſides this, the Apoſtle gives Chriſtian Women three Inſtructions: The *firſt* is, To be cloathed with Modeſty and Baſhfulneſs, as it becomes Women that profeſs to ſerve God; to ſhun Immodeſty, and exceſs of Ornaments; and to practiſe theſe

Rules chiefly when they repair to the Religious Aſſemblies. The *ſecond* is, To remain in Silence and Submiſſion, as well in the Church as at Home, with reſpect to their Husbands. And the *third*, That they ſhall be ſaved, if they take care of the Children they bring into the World, if they educate them in Piety, and if they themſelves continue in Faith, Charity, Holineſs, and Modeſty.

CHAP. III.

ST. *Paul* ſpeaks in this Chapter, I. Of the Importance of the Office of a Biſhop, and of a Paſtor, and of the Qualities belonging to thoſe that exerciſe theſe Employments. II. Of the Office of Deacons, whoſe buſineſs it was to adminiſter the Alms of the Church, and to aſſiſt the Biſhops in their Functions; and he ſhews likewiſe how Deacons ought to be qualified. III. To engage *Timothy* to govern the Church as he ought, he repreſents to him the Dignity of the Church of God, and the Excellency of the Doctrine that is taught therein.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT St. *Paul* ſays of the Excellency of the Office of a Biſhop, and of the Qualifications that are required in ſuch as aſpire to, or exerciſe the ſame, ſhews, that this Office is of divine Inſtitution, and of the higheſt Importance. This is what Paſtors ought, I. Moſt ſeriouſly to conſider, to the end, that they may render themſelves worthy of ſo holy a Function, not only by avoiding all thoſe Defects that might render their Miniſtry unfruitful, and by living in ſuch a Manner, as that no Reproaches can juſtly be made them; but moreover, by an

an edifying Behaviour, and by giving an Example of all kind of Virtues. This ſhews likewiſe, that it is not allowed to admit into the Miniſtry, Perſons that are blameable, and not able to teach and govern the Church of God. All Chriſtians are to conſider, in the next Place, that ſince this Office is of ſo great Conſequence, and ſince the Salvation of Souls, and the Glory of God, depend on it, we ſhould beſeech the Lord that he would always raiſe up faithful Paſtors in the Church, as we are bound to reverence thoſe who bear that Character. II. As for what relates to the Office of Deacons, we find likewiſe that that is of divine Inſtitution; wherefore 'tis a very great Fault that it ſhould be now aboliſhed in moſt Chriſtian Churches. III. And *Laſtly*, What the Apoſtle ſays of the Dignity of the Church, of the Living God, and of the Excellency of the Doctrine of the Goſpel which is taught therein, ought to be ſeriouſly conſider'd, as well by thoſe that govern the Church, as by all the faithful Members thereof, to the end, that both the one and the other may be thereby ſtirred up to diſcharge their Duty each of them according to his Condition, and to behave in ſuch manner, as becomes the Excellency of their Calling.

CHAP. IV.

I. THE Apoſtle warns *Timothy*, that there would riſe up falſe Teachers, who would condemn Marriage, and the Uſe of certain Meats. II. He exhorts him to teach the pure Doctrine, and to ſtick to true Piety, of which he repreſents the Advantage, and the Effects. III. He recommends to him, to render his Miniſtry and his Youth reſpectable, and apply himſelf diligently to all his Duties.

Reflexions after the Reading.

TO benefit out ſelves by this Reading, we muſt obſerve, I. That the Prediction St. *Paul* here makes, that there would be People that would forbid Marriage, and the Uſe of Meats, was accompliſhed, not only in the primitive Church, but likewiſe in the following Ages, as we ſee at this Day. This ſhould make us own how important it is to avoid Error and Superſtition, and never to depart from the Doctrine of the Goſpel; but it muſt likewiſe be remembered, that what St. *Paul* ſays here, does by no means authorize Libertiniſm and Senſuality; and that Marriage and the Uſe of God's Creatures are not allowed but ſo far as they are uſed with Moderation and with Thankſgiving. II. We are taught in this Chapter, that Godlineſs is the moſt profitable Thing even in this World, becauſe, as St. *Paul* ſays, *it has the Promiſe of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.* And that God, who takes Care of all Men, does particularly provide for his Faithful. III. St. *Paul* ſhews in this Chapter the Duty of the Miniſters of the Goſpel; it is to Preach pure Doctrine, to exerciſe Godlineſs above all things, to behave in ſuch Manner that none may deſpiſe them, to be a pattern to the Faithful of Holineſs, Purity, and all kind of Virtues, both in their Diſcourſes and in their Actions; to cultivate their Gifts by Labour, by Study, and by a diligent Application to the Functions of their Office, ſo that all the World may be a Witneſs of their Progreſs, and *that they may ſave themſelves, and thoſe who hear them.* And we on our Parts ought to beſeech God that He would Sanctifie thoſe who exerciſe this Office, that they

they may discharge all these Duties to the Glory of God, and to the Edification of his Church.

CHAP. V.

I. ST. *Paul* prescribes to *Timothy*, how he is to govern himself in Councils and Reproofs, and in receiving Widows that were maintained at the Expence of the Church, and who served in several Charitable employments; upon which occasion he shews the Duty of Women, and the Faults they are to avoid. II. He speaks next of the Honour and Stipend due to Pastors, and what Rules are to be observed when they were accused, or when any one was to be admitted into that Office.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WHAT is said in this Chapter, is a Lesson to the Rulers of the Church, to dispense their Exhortations with Prudence and Discretion; to administer every thing relating to Religion with Integrity and Precaution; to take care that Alms be rightly Distributed, and to be very Circumspect in the Exercise of Discipline, and at such Times as it is requisite to admit Persons into the holy Ministry. II. The Laws which St. *Paul* prescribes concerning the Widows who were supported by, and who served the Church, shew that charitable Benevolences and sacred Things ought to be entrusted to Persons of Gravity and Probity, and that those who can assist their poor Relations, ought not to burden the Church with them. We see here particularly, that aged Women ought to apply themselves to Works of Piety and Charity, and

and to give young Women good Instructions, and set them good Examples; that to be idle, busy Bodies, Tattlers, and to gad from House to House, is a Life unworthy of Christian Women, whom God requires to be discreet, retired, and to take Care of their House and Family. The Order S. *Paul* gives *Timothy*, to reprove Publickly those that Sin, confirms the necessity of Church Discipline and publick Censures. Lastly, we may gather from this whole Chapter, that the Ministry is a very important Office; that it requires a great deal of Prudence and Integrity; that we ought not lightly to accuse nor condemn those who exercise it; that Ministers who acquit themselves worthily of their Office, deserve double Honour; that the Churches ought to love them, and are obliged to provide sufficiently for their Maintenance.

CHAP. VI.

MENTION is made in this Chapter, I. Of the Duties of Servants towards their Masters: II. Of false Doctors, who taught a different Doctrine from that of St. *Paul*'s, and of the Mischiefs they caused in the Church, by raising Disputes there; and because these Doctors acted only with a View to their Interest. III. St. *Paul* speaks of Content of Mind, and of the Evils that proceed from the love of Riches. IV. He calls upon *Timothy* with great earnestness, to observe all that he had directed him, to keep purity of Doctrine, and to shun vain Disputes.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Care St. *Paul* takes to deſcribe the Duty of Servants, after having mention'd that of Paſtors, ſhews, that God deſires the Salvation of all ſort of Perſons, and that he has no reſpect to the Difference of Conditions. This ſhews likewiſe, that Servants ought to be Faithful, and in Subjection to their Maſters, and to conſider, that if in the Time of St. *Paul*, the Slaves, whoſe Maſters were *Heathens*, were obliged to this Duty, thoſe who ſerve Chriſtian Maſters are under much ſtricter Obligations. II. We ſhould ſeriouſly reflect upon what is here ſaid about vain Diſputes, and the great Miſchiefs they produce in the Church; for which reaſon, both thoſe that teach, as well as thoſe that learn, are bound to avoid them, and to have nothing to do with thoſe that raiſe them. III. A third Inſtruction which St. *Paul* gives us is, *That the Love of Money is the Root of all evil; but that they that will be Rich, fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown Men in Deſtruction and Perdition.* Let us never forget this Leſſon; let us always remember theſe excellent and wholſome Inſtructions, *viz. That Godlineſs with Contentment is great gain. That we brought nothing into this World, and that it is certain we can carry nothing out. That having Food and Raiment, we ought to be therewith content.* Let us alſo with St. *Paul*, exhort thoſe who have worldly Goods, not to be Proud, but to be rich in good Works, that they may have a Treaſure for the Time to come, and obtain everlaſting Life. *Laſtly*, The grave and ſolemn Manner, in which St. *Paul* requires *Timothy* to fulfil all the Duties of his Office,

Office, and to keep faithfully that which was committed to his care, ſhould engage all thoſe that exerciſe the holy Miniſtry, to redouble their Zeal, and to acquit themſelves of their Duty with ſuch fidelity, that *having fought the good Fight of Faith, they may lay hold on eternal Life.*—— *And be unrebukeable until the Appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which in his Times He ſhall ſhew who is the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; who only hath Immortality, dwelling in the Light which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath ſeen, nor can ſee, to whom be Honour and Power everlaſting.* Amen.

II. *Timothy.*

THE Apoſtle St. *Paul*, writ this Epiſtle in the Year of Chriſt *Sixty four*, whilſt he was a Priſoner at *Rome*, and a little before he ſuffer'd Martyrdom. He here exhorts *Timothy* to diſcharge with faithfulneſs and freſh Zeal, the Duties of his Office.

CHAP. I.

I. IN this Chapter, St. *Paul* ſhews the Tenderneſs he had for *Timothy*, whoſe Faith and Godlineſs he commends. II. He exhorts him to double his Zeal, and not to be diſcouraged by reaſon of Afflictions, to which the Faithful, and eſpecially the Miniſters of the Goſpel, were expoſed; and always to retain the pure Doctrine of *Jeſus Chriſt*. III. He complains of thoſe that had forſaken him, and prays to God for the Family of *Oneſiphorus*, which took care of him in the Time he was in Priſon at *Rome*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Praiſes St. *Paul* gives at the Beginning of this Epiſtle, of the Piety which *Timothy* had ſhewn, even from his Youth, and in which he was educated by his Mother and Grandmother, is a Proof of the great Happineſs of a Chriſtian Education, and that thoſe Parents who inſpire their Children with Holineſs, do beſtow upon them the greateſt of all Goods. But the Exhortations St. *Paul* makes *Timothy*, to kindle more and more the Gift of God which was in him, and to perſevere in the Faith, do likewiſe ſhew, that thoſe who have been religiouſly Educated, ought carefully to preſerve that heavenly Gift, endeavour to increaſe it, and make a conſtant Profeſſion of Piety, without ever being aſhamed of it, or without being diſcouraged by the Oppoſitions they meet with. All Chriſtians ought to have theſe Thoughts, but it does in a more particular manner concern the Miniſters of the Goſpel, and the Example of *Timothy* teaches us, that it is a moſt precious Advantage to the Church, when God has ſet over it Paſtors that have been endowed with Piety from their Youth, and whoſe Zeal is alway increaſing. The Prayers which the Apoſtle makes for *Oneſiphorus*, who had not forſaken him like others, but had comforted him in his Priſon, ſhew, that it is a Work very acceptable to God, to relieve the Afflicted, and eſpecially ſuch as ſuffer for the Goſpel; and that thoſe who have done it, will receive their Reward, and find Mercy from the Lord at the laſt Day.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

I. THIS Chapter contains Exhortations from St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, to undergo with Courage the Troubles that attended the Exercise of his Office. II. He recommends to him, to preach the pure Word of God, and to restrain idle and profane Disputes, of which he represents the pernicious Consequences, by comparing them to a Gangreen, which spreads more and more, and by shewing that they were capable of engaging Men in deadly Errors. III. The Apostle adds, that nevertheless there were always some true Believers, that kept themselves free from these Errors, and that the Character by which God owns them is, that they withdrew from Sin. IV. And, Lastly, he orders *Timothy* to fly from the Desires of Youth, to restrain Disputes, and labour to bring back those that were fallen into Error.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT has been now read, ought to be carefully meditated by the Ministers of the Gospel. They may here see, that their Office calls them to serve *Christ* faithfully, and to devote themselves to Him entirely, without engaging in the Business of this Life; to take great Pains to promote the Edification of the Church; to banish Disputes out of it, and to bring back from their Wanderings, those that are engaged in Error or Vice. These Exhortations do likewise concern all of us, since the Character of Christians, which we bear, calls upon us, as much as upon the Ministers themselves, to renounce every thing that may hinder us from being Faithful to *Jesus Christ*,

Chriſt, and obliges us to do, and to ſuffer every thing for the Love of Him, remembering, that *if we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo Reign with Him*: *If we deny Him, He will alſo deny us.* We ſee moreover in this Chapter, that it is dangerous to hearken to thoſe who raiſe troubles in the Church, and ſpread Errors therein; and that therefore every one ought to be upon his Guard, and always adhere to the Doctrine which is taught him in the Word of God. Laſtly, all Chriſtians ſhould carefully remember theſe Words of St. *Paul*, which contain the Subſtance of Religion, *viz.*: That *the Lord knoweth them that are his*; and that the Token by which He owns them is, that they *depart from Iniquity*; that in the Church there are Veſſels of Honour and Veſſels of Diſhonour, that is to ſay, there are good and evil Men; and that *if a Man purge himſelf from Sin, he ſhall be a Veſſel unto Honour, Sanctified, and meet for the Maſter's Uſe, and prepared unto every good Work.*

CHAP. III.

I. ST. *Paul* foretels that great Corruption would creep into the Church, by the Means of falſe Teachers. II. He exhorts *Timothy* to ſhun ſuch People, to withſtand them, to imitate his Conduct and Patience under Afflictions, and chiefly to ſtick to the Doctrine contained in the holy Scriptures, of which he proves the Divinity and Advantage.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Prohpecy which we have read in this Chapter, and which ſhews that in the latter Days there would be perilous Times,

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is very remarkable. We have ſeen already, and we continue to ſee the Accompliſhment thereof, a great Number of Chriſtians being involved in all kind of Sins and Diſorders, and ſeveral having the Form of Godlineſs, but renouncing the Power thereof. Since this great Corruption was ſo long ago foretold, we ſhould not be ſcandalized at it; on the contrary, we ought to be thereby more and more confirmed in the Truth. God has thought fit to warn us thereof, to the End that we do not ſuffer our ſelves to be drawn away by evil Examples, but that following the Exhortation of St. *Paul*, we ſhould reſiſt Sin, and flee from thoſe that are Guilty of it. This is the Duty of all Chriſtians, and particularly of the Miniſters of the Goſpel. II. This Chapter teaches us, that if whilſt we do our Duty, by withſtanding Vice and Impiety, we ſhould be expoſed to the Contradictions of Sinners, there is nothing more will befal us than what formerly happened to *Moſes*, to St. *Paul*, and moſt of the Saints, becauſe *all that will live Godly in* Chriſt Jeſus *ſhall ſuffer Perſecution.* Laſtly, the Apoſtle teaches us, that the Way to ſecure our ſelves and others from Sin and Error is, never to depart from the holy Scripture. What St. *Paul* ſays here concerning the Divinity of that ſacred Book, and of its uſefulneſs, ſhould engage all Chriſtians, and eſpecially Paſtors, to read and meditate it continually, for they will there find all that is neceſſary to *make them wiſe unto Salvation, through Faith which is in* Jeſus Chriſt,—— *And to render them perfect, and throughly furniſhed unto all good Works.*

CHAP. IV.

I. ST. *Paul* continues to exhort *Timothy* with great earneſtneſs to diſcharge all the Duties of his Office. And, II. That he

may the more effectually engage him thereto, he tells him his Death was drawing near, for which he ſhews great Joy, and firm Hope of the Glory of Heaven. III. He orders *Timothy* to come and ſee him as ſoon as poſſible, he complains of thoſe that had forſaken him, and concludes this Epiſtle with Salutations and affectionate Wiſhes.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THOSE whom God calls to the holy Miniſtry have in this Chapter powerful Motives to diſcharge all the Parts of their Duty, and eſpecially to preach the Word of God, to reprove, and in all Seaſons to exhort, with Zeal, with Evidence, and with Meekneſs. It is what they are engaged to do by theſe grave Admonitions which St. *Paul* addreſſes to *Timothy*, in Summoning him before God, and from the Conſideration of the laſt Judgment, to redouble his Zeal, and Watchfulneſs. II. The Joy and Confidence which this Apoſtle ſhewed at the Time he was about to ſuffer Martyrdom, is a Proof to us of the great Courage and Conſtancy wherewith thoſe that have ſerved God faithfully are animated when their Death draws near. And ſince St. *Paul* declares that the Crown of Righteouſneſs was reſerved not only for him, but likewiſe for all thoſe who love the Appearance of their Lord and Saviour: We ought all of us to imitate this Apoſtle in the Zeal and Love which he teſtified for *Chriſt*: We ought to fight the good Fight, to finiſh our Courſe, and to keep the Faith, even to the End. III. The Complaints St. *Paul* makes againſt thoſe who had abandoned him, ſhews that there were in the Church at all Times worldly People, who loved the preſent Life better than *Chriſt*; as alſo

ſo fearful and cowardly Perſons, that durſt not make an open Profeſſion of Piety, nor ſtand by thoſe that maintained it. Laſtly, St. *Paul* ſhews us here, by his Example, that though the Faithful are without Support in reſpect to the World, yet that God never forſakes them in Trials and in Dangers, but that He Strengthens them, and after having delivered them from all Evil, He will ſave them in his heavenly Kingdom.

TITUS.

ST. *Paul* writ this Epiſtle to *Titus*, about the Year of Chriſt *Fifty one*, whom he had left in the Iſland of *Crete*, now called *Candia*, to take care of the Churches that were there.

CHAP. I.

THIS Chapter has two Parts. I. St. *Paul* orders *Titus* to appoint Paſtors in the Churches of the ſaid Iſland, and deſcribes the Characters with which they ought to be endowed. II. He ſpeaks of certain *Jewiſh* Doctors that taught Doctrines contrary to the Goſpel, and of the evil Diſpoſition of the Inhabitants of the Iſle of *Crete*.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THESE are the Inſtructions with which this Chapter affords us. I. St. *Paul* directs *Titus* to eſtabliſh Miniſters in all the Churches of *Crete*. From whence it appears, that the Office of Paſtors is of divine Inſtitution, and of abſolute Neceſſity; Moreover, the great Precautions which he adviſes him to take in the Choice of thoſe Miniſters he was to eſtabliſh, proves, that that ſacred Employment ought not to be intruſted but to Perſons without reproach, and of an exemplary Life, and who have therewithal the neceſſary Gifts to teach and preſerve the Purity of the Evangelical Doctrine againſt ſuch as would innovate therein. II. We ſee beſides, that it is the Duty of the Miniſters of Chriſt to ſet themſelves againſt falſe Doctors, and ſuch as might ſeduce Chriſtians, and engage them in Error or in Sin. What the Apoſtle ſays to *Titus*, of the Inhabitants of the Iſle of *Crete*, who were People addicted to Lying, Wickedneſs, Sloth, and Senſuality, ſhews, that 'tis very difficult for ſuch as have an evil Heart and vicious Inclinations to become true Diſciples of Chriſt; but that however, the Servants of God ought to reprove them ſtrongly, and neglect nothing to bring them to the Faith. *Laſtly*, We ought ſeriouſly to reflect upon the Deſcription the Apoſtle here makes of wicked Chriſtians, ſaying: *They profeſs that they know God, but in Works they deny him, being abominable, and diſobedient, and unto every good Work reprobate.* Theſe Words teach us, that the Profeſſion of Religion, and Faith in God, do not avail thoſe that live in Diſobedience, nor that renounce God by their Works, and that He will not own them for his.

CHAP. II.

ST. *Paul* does two Things in this Chapter. I. He ſhews the Duties of old Men, and Women, of young Men and Servants. II. He gives us here an excellent Abridgment of the Chriſtian Doctrine, and ſhews what is the Deſign of it.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. AGED Perſons may from hence learn to be ſober, grave, pious, and abounding in Charity; chriſtian Women to live likewiſe in Sobriety, to avoid Slander, to love their Husbands, to take care of their Children, and to keep the Houſe; young People, to be moderate, temperate, and regular in their whole Behaviour; and Servants to be ſubject to their Maſters, and ſerve them with Fidelity. II. But we ought all of us in general carefully to attend to the Summary of the Chriſtian Doctrine St. *Paul* gives us in this Chapter, in which He ſays, that the Grace of God that has been manifeſted by *Jeſus Chriſt*, calls us to renounce, not only Ungodlineſs, and other Crimes, but likewiſe worldly Luſts and Deſires; and to live in Temperance and Purity with reſpect to our ſelves, in Righteouſneſs towards our Neighbour, and in Piety towards God; that it is by living thus, that we may expect with aſſurance, the laſt and famous Coming of the great God and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, whoſe deſign in giving himſelf for us was, *to redeem us from all Iniquity, and purifie unto himſelf a peculiar People zealous of good Works.* Let us continually ſet theſe divine Inſtructions before our Eyes, ſince they contain

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he whole Goſpel, and let us regulate by them all our Thoughts, and all our Actions.

CHAP. III.

I. ST. *Paul* directs Chriſtians to ſubmit themſelves to the Powers, to ſlander no Body, and to abound in Meekneſs and Charity, even towards thoſe who were Enemies of the Chriſtian Religion; and to remember, that it was for this Reaſon that God out of his great Mercy had ſaved them themſelves at the Time when they likewiſe lived in all kind of Irregularities. II. He orders *Titus* in the next Place, to recommend particularly the Practice of good Works, to oppoſe ſuch as raiſed Troubles in the Church by fooliſh Queſtions, and to ſhun thoſe who formed Sects and Parties, and broached falſe and dangerous Doctrines; and he concludes with ſome Directions which he gives to *Titus*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter teaches us, I. To be ſubject to Kings and Magiſtrates, to avoid Calumny and Diſputes, and to behave with a perfect Meekneſs towards all ſort of Perſons. II. St. *Paul* teaches us here, that *God has ſaved us, not by works of Righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his Mercy,— through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour. That being juſtified by his Grace, we ſhould be made Heirs according to the Hope of everlaſting Life.* III. The Apoſtle ſhews in this Chapter, after the moſt poſitive manner, that there is nothing more certain, nor more important, nor what the Miniſters of the Goſpel ought to inculcate and recommend above all

things, than that *they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good Works: These things being good and profitable unto Men.* These Words ſhew, that the Practice of good Works is the moſt indiſpenſable Duty of Chriſtianity. Finally, We ſee here, that when there are Perſons in the Church, who teach dangerous Doctrines, and who form Sects and Parties therein; wherefore that which is to be done with reſpect to them is, to admoniſh them, and if they continue to occaſion Troubles, not to own them for Members of the Church, nor to have any communication with them.

PHILEMON.

ST. *Paul* writ this Epiſtle when he was a Priſoner at *Rome* the firſt Time, about the Year of Chriſt *Fifty ſix*, whereof this was the Subject. A Slave, named *Oneſimus*, having run away from his Maſter *Philemon*, and coming to *Rome*, met with St. *Paul*, who converted him to the Chriſtian Religion; after which he ſent him back to *Philemon*, with a Letter of Recommendation, in which he intreats him to forgive him, and to receive him as a Brother in *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE ſee in this Epiſtle, I. That *Oneſimus* coming to *Rome* after having fled from his Maſter *Philemon*, St. *Paul* laboured in the Converſion of this Fugitive Slave, and that he had the Comfort to bring him over to the Chriſtian

ſtian Faith; thus this Apoſtle, out of his great Zeal, embraced all Occaſions that offered themſelves to promote the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Men. II. We may obſerve here, the Charity of St. *Paul*, as well as his Juſtice and perfect Uprightneſs, by his recommending *Oneſimus* to *Philemon*, by ſending him back to him, and by offering to indemnifie *Philemon* for all that *Oneſimus* owed him, and for all the Wrong he might have done him. We ſhould learn from this Epiſtle, to lay hold upon all Occaſions to procure the Converſion of Perſons that are in Error, and to intereſt our ſelves for thoſe who ſtand in need of our Help, eſpecially for People in whom we diſcover any Tokens of Piety, or Sinners that return to their Duty. The Requeſt that St. *Paul* made to *Philemon*, that he would pardon *Oneſimus*, ſhews, that we ought always to be ready to pardon thoſe who have offended or injur'd us. We may likewiſe make this farther Reflexion, that if St. *Paul* offer'd to ſatisfie *Philemon* for what *Oneſimus* owed him, tho' he were not obliged in ſtrictneſs to do it, thoſe who have done any harm or wrong to others, are much more obliged to make it good. *Laſtly*, The Order which St. *Paul* gives *Philemon*, to receive *Oneſimus* no longer as a Slave, but as a Brother, ſhews, that Chriſtian Maſters ought to conſider their Servants as their Brethren in *Chriſt Jeſus*, and to treat them with all Mildneſs and Humanity.

HEBREWS.

ST. *Paul*, as it is thought, writ this Epiſtle in the Year of our Lord *Fifty ſix*, being Priſoner at *Rome*, and addreſſed it to the *Hebrews*, that is to ſay, to the *Jews* that were converted to Chriſtianity. His deſign is, to confirm them in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, and of Holineſs, and to prevent them from being drawn away by the Inclination which they might have preſerved for the *Jewiſh* Religion and Worſhip, or by Perſecutions, and the Temptations of Sin; for which purpoſe he ſhews, that Chriſt is the Meſſiah, that the Goſpel is more excellent than the Law, and that the Ceremonies and the Sacrifices of the Law had had their Accompliſhment in *Jeſus Chriſt*, and were conſequently aboliſhed by his Coming, and his Sacrifice. This is the Subject of the firſt ten Chapters. In the three laſt, he exhorts the *Hebrews* to perſevere in the Faith, to Patience under Afflictions, and to the moſt important Duties of Religion.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

ST. *Paul* teaches in this Chaper, I. That God had revealed Himſelf to Men, by *Jeſus Chriſt*, in the moſt perfect Manner. II. He proves the excellency of the Goſpel by the infinite Worth of *Chriſt*, ſhewing that He was exalted to a ſupream Glory in Heaven, and that He is more excellent than the Angels, and He eſtabliſhes the Divinity of his Perſon.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter, in which St. *Paul* proves the Excellency of the Goſpel, and the Divinity of our Lord, engages us, I. To acknowledge how happy we are to live in the Times of the Goſpel, and to praiſe God, who has ſent into the World, to inſtruct us concerning his Will, and to redeem us, Him who is his own Son, whom He has made to ſit on his right Hand in the Heavens, Him by whom the World was made, and whom all the Angels Worſhip. II. That God having ſpoken to us by his Son, and having made known to us his Will after a more perfect Manner, than He had done to the *Jews* by the Prophets; our Duty is, to lay hold on the Advantages of the Covenant of Grace, to worſhip *Jeſus Chriſt* as our Saviour and as our God, to ſubmit our ſelves to Him, and to obey the Goſpel which He has cauſed to bepreached to us, ſince 'tis the laſt and the moſt perfect of all Revelations.

CHAP. II.

I. ST. *Paul* exhorts the *Hebrews* to continue Steady in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel which had been declared to them by *Jeſus Chriſt* and

and the Apoſtles, and confirmed by the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. II. He ſhews for this Purpoſe, that all things are put under the Subjection of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and that God has raiſed him to heavenly Glory after his Sufferings and Death. III. He ſhews in the laſt Place, that God was pleaſed that our Lord ſhould take our Nature and Suffer, to the End, that He might redeem Men from the Power of the Devil and of Death, and to the End, that the Faithful might learn from his Example, not to be afraid of Afflictions.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. *Paul* teaches us here, I. That the Goſpel having been preached by *Jeſus Chriſt* and the Apoſtles, and confirmed by the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, we have undeniable Proofs of the Divinity of the Chriſtian Doctrine, and that therefore we ſhall be altogether inexcuſable, and ſhall not eſcape the Vengeance of God, if we neglect this great Salvation that is offer'd to us, and if we obey not the Goſpel. II. The Conſideration of the Glory and Power, wherewith Chriſt was inveſted after his Humiliation and Death, teach us, that the Sufferings to which the Faithful are expoſed, will not hinder them from attaining to Glory; it having been the Will of God, that they ſhall be led thereto, by the ſame Way by which *Chriſt* Himſelf arrived at it. III. We ought likewiſe to conſider, that the Son of God took upon Him the Nature of Man, and was contented to be made a little lower than the Angels for a while, to the End, that by an Effect of the Goodneſs of God He might die for all Men, make an Attonement for their Sins, and deſtroy the Empire of the Devil, and of Death. This is a Doctrine which ſhould fill us with Joy and a

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firm Reliance upon God through Chriſt, and which likewiſe very ſtrongly engages us to live as his redeemed, and to flee from Sin, leaſt we ſhould fall again under the Power of the Devil and of Death, from which our Lord has deliver'd us.

CHAP. III.

THE Apoſtle does two Things in this Chapter. He ſhews, I. That *Chriſt* was far above *Moſes*, ſince *Moſes* was only a Servant in the Houſe of God, whereas *Chriſt*, as a Son, is the Lord and Maſter thereof. II. He exhorts the *Hebrews* to obey the Goſpel, and not to imitate the *Iſraelites*, who were excluded from the Land of *Canaan*, and who died in the Wilderneſs, becauſe of their Rebellion and Unbelief.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT St. *Paul* ſays in this Chapter; I. Of the Excellency of the Perſon and Miniſtry of *Chriſt* above that of *Moſes*, ſhould make us ſenſible of the Obligation which Chriſtians lie under of adhering to *Chriſt*, by a ſincere Obedience and true Faith, as it proves the greatneſs of the Crime, of which thoſe who diſobey Him are Guilty. II. We ſee next, that the ancient *Iſraelites*, for having been Rebellious and Unbelieving, when *Moſes* cauſed them to hear the Voice of God, died in the Wilderneſs; and God ſwore that they ſhould not enter into the Land of *Canaan*. 'Tis thus God reſolves to exclude from Heaven thoſe whoſe Heart wanders from the right Way, and who provoke Him by their Rebellion and Obdurateneſs. *Wherefore as the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, to Day if we will hear his Voice, let us not harden our Hearts; let us take heed*

heed leaſt there be in any of us an evil Heart of Unbelief in departing from the living God: But let us exhort one another daily, whilſt this Time and Day of Grace laſts, leaſt any of us be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of Sin.

CHAP. IV.

I. ST. *Paul* continues to ſhew, that as the diſobedient *Iſraelites* did not enter into the Land of *Canaan*, ſo neither ſhall the unbelieving Chriſtians enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. For this Purpoſe he obſerves, that what is ſaid in the Old-Teſtament of the Reſt of God, relates to the Times of the Goſpel, and to that true Reſt which conſiſts in the Salvation that *Chriſt* has obtained for us. II. He concludes from thence, that we ought to labour to enter into this Reſt. He declares, that Unbelievers ſhall not eſcape thoſe Threatenings which the Word of God has denounced againſt them; and to encourage the *Hebrews* to perſevere in the Chriſtian Profeſſion, and be Conſtant under Afflictions, He repreſents that *Jeſus Chriſt* is a merciful High-Prieſt, who Himſelf having ſuffered, is inclined to have Compaſſion upon our Infirmities, and to aſſiſt us in all our Wants.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn from this Chapter, I. That thoſe who deſpiſe and neglect the Promiſes of God, ſhall be deprived of them; and that the Word of God is of no Uſe, when it is not attended with Faith in thoſe that hear it; wherefore we ought to be careful, after what manner we receive this Word and theſe Promiſes. II. St. *Paul* teaches us, that there is an everlaſting Reſt which *Chriſt* has acquired for us,

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and which is much more excellent than that that was promiſed to the *Iſraelites*; but as the rebellious *Iſraelites* did not enter into the Reſt of the Land of *Canaan*, ſo thoſe who do not obey *Chriſt Jeſus*, will be deprived of that Reſt which is promiſed us in the Goſpel. Let us therefore endeavour to enter into that Reſt, leaſt we ſhould fall into the like Rebellion. For which Purpoſe let us conſider, III. That as all that the Word of God ſays, is true, the Threatnings of the Goſpel are alſo no leſs certain, that they will be infallibly executed, and that we ſhall not be able to eſcape from Him, with whom we have to do, ſince all things are naked and open in his Sight. Laſtly, ſince we have in Heaven *Jeſus* our ſupream High-Prieſt, who Himſelf was tempted in all things, Sin only accepted, let us hold faſt the Profeſſion we make of Believing in him; and *let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in the Time of need.*

CHAP. V.

ST. *Paul* treating of the Prieſthood of *Jeſus Chriſt* ſhews, I. That he was called by God to the Office of a Prieſt, which he proves by two Prophecies, taken out of the Book of *Pſalms*, and particularly by obſerving that he was to be like *Melchiſedec*, who had been King and Prieſt together. II. He ſays next, that *Chriſt* performed the Functions of a Prieſt, when He ſuffered Death for the Salvation of Men. III. And Laſtly, being about to ſpeak of the Prieſthood of our Lord, and of the reſemblance there was between Him and *Melchizedec*, he reproaches the *Hebrews* with the ſmall Progreſs they had made in the Knowledge of Religion, and which hindered them from underſtanding what he was going to ſay to them.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THIS Chapter teaches us, that *Chriſt* was appointed by God to be our High-Prieſt, and that under this Character He offer'd up Himſelf a Sacrifice for the Sins of Mankind. This engages us to look upon *Jeſus Chriſt* as the Author of our Salvation, and as Him who has render'd God propitious and favourable to us; but this very Doctrine ſhould likewiſe convince us of our obligation to ſubmit ourſelves to the Goſpel, by a ſincere Obedience: Since, as St. *Paul* ſays, *Chriſt* did not *become the Author of eternal Salvation, but unto all them that obey Him.* II. A ſecond Reflexion that is to be made upon what St. *Paul* ſays in this Chapter is, that our Lord, *in the Days of his Fleſh, offered up Prayers and Supplications, with ſtrong Crying and Tears, unto Him that was able to ſave Him from Death, and was heard, in that He feared, having learnt Obedience by the Things which He ſuffered.* The Children of God may diſcover from hence, that when they are under great Sufferings, they are like their Saviour; that God ſends them Afflictions, to teach them Patience and Obedience, and call upon Him with greater Zeal; but at the ſame Time they may likewiſe be aſſured, that God will hear them when they offer up their Prayers to Him in their Neceſſities. III. The laſt Verſes of this Chapter, in which the Apoſtle reproaches the *Hebrews* of being ſo little advanced in the Knowledge of Religion, and of ſtill wanting to be taught the Rudiments thereof, oblige us to conſider, that it would be a much greater ſhame if we ſhould deſerve the like Reproaches, conſidering the Time that is employed in inſtructing us; wherefore we ought to exert our-

ſelves in acquiring new Lights, and in daily making greater Progreſs in the Knowledge of Religion.

CHAP. VI.

I. ST. *Paul* tells the *Hebrews*, that it was not his Intention to teach them the firſt Rudiments of Religion, but that he deſigned to propoſe to them more ſublime Doctrines, by diſcourſing of the Similitude which there was between Chriſt and *Melchiſedec*, and the ancient Prieſts. II. To excite them to proceed in the Knowledge of the Myſteries of the Goſpel, he ſets before their Eyes, the Unhappineſs of thoſe, who neglecting to be confirmed in the Faith, and deſpiſing the Lights and Graces they had received from God, do forſake *Jeſus Chriſt*, and do no longer produce the Fruits which God expects from them. III. He tells the *Hebrews*, that the Reaſon why he ſpake to them in this manner was, to awaken their Zeal, ſince he was convinced that they would not expoſe themſelves to the like Misfortune. IV. And, *Laſtly*, to ſtrengthen their Faith, he repreſents to them the Steadineſs of God's Promiſes, and the Certainty of that Hope which Chriſt's Entrance into Heaven gives all Believers.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WE ought to take great Notice of the firſt Verſes of this Chapter, ſince St. *Paul* ſhews us thereby, what are the fundamental Articles of Religion, *viz.* The Doctrine of Faith in God; of Repentance; of Baptiſm, and the Impoſition of Hands, which in thoſe Times was joined to Baptiſm; of the Reſurrection of the Dead; and of the laſt Judgment. Where-

Wherefore theſe are the Doctrines to which we ſhould chiefly adhere. II. The Apoſtle teaches us, that 'tis not enough to know theſe Doctrines, but that Chriſtians ought to aim at greater Perfection, and to join to the Knowledge of theſe eſſential Truths, that of other Truths, which, tho' they be leſs important, ſerve to enlighten Religion, and to confirm the Faith. III. He declares to us in this Chapter, that thoſe who, after having been enlighten'd, and after having taſted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, ſhould fall away, it would be impoſſible, at leaſt extremely difficult, for them to be renewed again unto Repentance, if they perſevere in ſuch a Condition. This ſhould make us extreamly afraid to ſin againſt Light, to abuſe the Word of God, and to reſiſt his Grace, leaſt we ſhould become like the *Earth, which drinking in the Rain that cometh oft upon it, bears nothing but Thorns and Briars, and is therefore rejected, and is nigh unto Curſing, and its end to be burned.* IV. And *Laſtly*, thoſe who believe the Goſpel, and manifeſt the Sincerity of their Faith by their Patience and Charity, may for their comfort and encouragement conſider what the Apoſtle ſays here, that *God is not unrighteous, to forget their Work and labour of love*; that the Promiſes of God are unchangeable, having been made with an Oath, and confirmed by the Entrance of Chriſt into Heaven; and therefore, that the Hope of the Faithful is as a ſtrong and ſure Anchor of the Soul, which ſupports them, and which penetrates even into Heaven, where Chriſt is entered as our forerunner.

CHAP. VII.

THESE are the Contents and Purport of this Chapter. St. *Paul* has a Mind to ſhew the Excellency of the Prieſthood of *Jeſus Chriſt*, by proving Him a Prieſt according to the Order of *Melchiſedec*. For which end he obſerves, I. That *Melchiſedec* was a Prieſt after a different Manner from the *Jewiſh* Prieſts: This appears, becauſe he was a King, becauſe the Scripture does not relate his Genealogy, and becauſe it is ſaid that he had neither Predeceſſors, nor Succeſſors after his Death, and that therefore he was alone in his Kind; and laſtly, becauſe he was ſuperiour to *Abraham*, that Patriarch having paid him Tythes of the Spoil. II. St. *Paul* obſerves farther, that neither *Melchiſedec* nor *Chriſt* were of the Family of *Aaron*, out of which the *Jewiſh* Prieſts were choſen, and that God had promiſed with an Oath, that the Prieſthood according to *Melchiſedec* was to be everlaſting. From all theſe Conſiderations, St. *Paul* would infer, that God having promiſed that the Meſſiah ſhould be a Prieſt as *Melchiſedec*, his Prieſthood was of a quite different Nature from that of the *Jewiſh Prieſts*; that he was to be both King and Prieſt together, and the only Prieſt alſo; that his Prieſthood was to be one alone, and moſt perfect, and that conſequently, the Levitical Prieſthood was to be aboliſhed. III. The Apoſtle ſhews, about the end of the Chapter, that Chriſt infinitely excelled the *Jewiſh* Prieſts by his perfect Holineſs.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE principal Obſervation that we are to make upon this whole Chapter is, to acknowledge and admire the infinite Wiſdom of God, who had ſo clearly ſignified in the ancient Prophecies what the Meſſiah was to be, as St. *Paul* ſhews, by proving with ſo much Evidence and Strength out of the Law it ſelf, and from the old Teſtament, that the Levitical Worſhip and Prieſthood were to be aboliſhed by the Sacrifice and Oblation of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. This ought powerfully to convince us of the Truth of the Goſpel, and ſtir us up to ſearch and meditate the Scriptures and Oracles of the Prophets, in which we find ſuch noble Proofs of the Divinity of the Chriſtian Doctrine. And ſince the Deſign of this whole Chapter tends to inſtruct us in the Perfection and Efficacy of the Sacrifice of Chriſt, we cannot doubt but that we ſhall find in Him all that is neceſſary to obtain the Pardon of our Sins, and to purifie our Souls; and that having for our Prieſt and our King him who is perfectly holy, and exalted above the Heavens, he will be able to ſave all thoſe that come to God by Him.

CHAP. VIII.

THE Apoſtle does two Things. I. He continues to ſhew, that Chriſt was ſuperiour to the *Jewiſh* Prieſts upon the following account: That having been exalted to Heaven, He is the Miniſter and High Prieſt of the Heavenly Sanctuary, whereas the ancient Prieſts were no more than Miniſters of the earthly Sanctuary. II. He ſhews in the ſame View, that God had foretold by the Prophet *Jeremiah*,

that the Covenant which he formerly made with the *Iſraelites* ſhould be aboliſhed, and that He would enter into a more excellent one with Mankind, in which He would pardon their Sins, and ſanctifie them by his Spirit.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter engages us to make the three following Reflexions. I. That we have a high Prieſt ſet down in the Heavens upon the right Hand of the Divine Majeſty. This Entrance of Chriſt into Heaven, ſhould fully convince us of the Perfection and Efficacy of this Sacrifice, and ſhould likewiſe aſſure us, that He has procured us a Right to the Heavenly Glory, and that He will one Day bring us thither. II. The *ſecond* Reflexion relates to the Happineſs we have of being admitted into the new Covenant which God had promiſed to make with Men at the Coming of the Meſſiah, for which we ought to return Him our moſt ſincere Thanks. III. In the *third* Place, we ought to conſider, that the End which God propoſed to himſelf by this Covenant was, to put his Laws in our Heart, to fill us all with his Knowledge and his Fear, and to forgive us our Sins. Let us on our ſide make him ſuitable Returns, let us faithfully diſcharge thoſe Duties which our Covenant with Him requires of us; let us beware of being like the *Jews*, who did not keep the Covenant of the Lord, and who, for that Reaſon, were rejected by Him; let us beſeech Him, for that purpoſe, that He himſelf, according to his Promiſes, would vouchſafe to engrave his holy Laws upon our Hearts, and upon our Minds, and increaſe in us his Knowledge more and more, ſo that we may always be his true People, and He may be always our God.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

I. ST. *Paul* gives us a Deſcription of the ancient Tabernacle, and of the Service performed therein; and he obſerves particularly, that the High-Prieſt enter'd but once a Year only into the moſt holy Place, which was to ſhew, that the Way to Heaven was not yet opened for all Men. II. He informs us next, that all theſe Things were Types and Figures of what was to happen one Day, and eſpecially, that the Entrance of the High Prieſt into the moſt holy Place ſignified, that Chriſt would enter into Heaven by his own Blood, and that by this means He would obtain for us an eternal Redemption, his Blood having an efficacy which that of the legal Victims wanted. III. The Apoſtle adds, that as the ancient Covenant was confirmed by the Blood of Beaſts, ſo likewiſe was the new by the Blood of Chriſt. IV. He concludes from all this, that the Sacrifice of Chriſt is perfect, and of an infinite Value; that it will not be repeated; and that Chriſt being once Dead, there is nothing more to be expected, but that He ſhould come at the laſt Day to introduce the Faithful into Glory.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Compariſon St. *Paul* makes, between the Prieſts of the Law, and *Jeſus Chriſt*, tends chiefly to inſtruct us of the Power and Virtue of his Death, and of his Sacrifice. We ſee here, that the Blood of Chriſt has a Quality, with which the Legal Sacrifices were not endowed, foraſmuch as it opens to us the Way to Heaven, our Lord being enter'd into it for us, as well as for Himſelf, which exalts us to

the moſt glorious Hopes; but St. *Paul* teaches us likewiſe, that this Blood muſt ſanctifie and *purge our Conſcience from dead Works, to ſerve the Living God.* By which we ſee, that the Sacrifice of Chriſt lays us under a Neceſſity of Labouring for our Sanctification, if we deſire to reap any Advantage from it. To the ſame end, we muſt meditate upon what is ſaid in this Chapter, that the Covenant of the Goſpel was confirmed by the Blood and Death of the Son of God; from which period, that Covenant is firm and unchangeable in all that it contains; the Duties it preſcribes are altogether inviolable and ſacred, and its Threats, as well as its Promiſes, will be infallibly executed. *Laſtly*, If the Sacrifice of Chriſt was made once for all, and can never be repeated; and if there remains nothing more, but that He ſhould return at the laſt Day to ſave thoſe that wait for Him, and who live in Godlineſs; it follows from thence, that there is but one only Means, and one only Term to obtain Salvation. The only Means is, to lay hold on the Grace which is offered us in *Chriſt Jeſus*; and the only Term is, the Time of this Life; ſince *it is appointed unto Men once to die, and after that the Judgment.*

CHAP. X. 1,——18.

ST. *Paul* ſhews, that the Sacrifices of the Law had not the Power of attoning for the Sins of Men, nor of ſanctifying them; and that nothing but the Sacrifice of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Oblation He has once made of his Body by the Will of God, is capable to juſtifie and ſanctifie us perfectly and for ever.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we have read, inſtructs us in the Perfection of the Sacrifice of Chriſt, and of its effects. St. *Paul* teaches us, that our Sins were expiated by the Oblation Chriſt made of his Body upon the Croſs; and that after having offer'd Himſelf as a Sacrifice for the Sins of Mankind, he is ſet down for ever on the right Hand of God. Beſides this, the Apoſtle makes us conſider the Sacrifice of our Lord as an effect of his Submiſſion to the Will of his Father, and of his Love towards us. Theſe are Conſiderations that ſhould inſpire us with an ardent Love for this charitable Saviour, and engage us likewiſe to ſubmit in all Things to the Will of God. And ſince this Will, and the Oblation that Chriſt has made of himſelf, have no other Views but our Salvation; ſince the Work of our Redemption is fully accompliſhed, and ſince God has received us into his Covenant, 'tis our Buſineſs to lay hold upon theſe precious Advantages which our Lord has attained for us by his Death and Aſcenſion into Heaven, and to diſcharge with Faithfulneſs all the Duties of this Covenant of Grace, under which we have the Happineſs to live; leaſt by our Ingratitude and Diſobedience we deprive our ſelves of the Fruits of the Death of Chriſt.

CHAP. X. 19,——39.

ST. *Paul* having ſhewn the Efficacy of the Sacrifice of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, does three Things. I. He exhorts the *Hebrews* to draw near to God with Confidence, and to perſevere in the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion, and in

in the Practice of good Works. II. He threatens with the moſt terrible Puniſhments thoſe, who after having received the Knowledge of the Goſpel, fall into Diſobedience and Apoſtacy. III. To the End that Chriſtians ſhould not turn away from the Profeſſion of the Truth, by reaſon of Perſecution, he exhorts them to ſuffer with the ſame Conſtancy as they had done till then.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THESE Words furniſh us with three Inſtructions. I. That ſince *Chriſt* has obtained for us, by his Death and Aſcenſion, the Liberty of entering into Heaven, we ought to draw near to God with a full Reliance, and at the ſame Time with a Heart purified and cleanſed from the Defilements of Sin, and to excite one another continually to Piety, Charity, and all kind of good Works. II. That although the Goſpel be a Covenant of Grace, yet it threatens with the moſt dreadful Puniſhments thoſe that ſhall break it; that the Puniſhments which the Goſpel denounces againſt thoſe that ſhall deſpiſe the Blood of the Son of God, and offer Violence to his Holy Spirit, are infinitely more terrible, than what was inflicted upon thoſe who violated the Law of *Moſes*; that there remains no more Sacrifices for Rebellious and Apoſtate Chriſtians, that they have nothing to expect but a tremendous Judgment, and that it is a dreadful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God. III. This Portion of Scripture teaches us, that Chriſtians ought never to faint under Perſecutions; that they ought even to ſuffer with Joy, the Loſs of their Goods, and the moſt grievous Afflictions, ſince they will afterwards meet with a great Recompenſe from God; and that when they have done his Will, they ſhall infallibly receive the Effect of his Promiſes.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI. 1,——22.

THE Apoſtle, to confirm the Faith of the *Hebrews*, propoſes to them in this Chapter, the Example of the *Patriarchs*, and of the ancient Believers, who, by their Faith and Reliance upon the Promiſes of God, had been acceptable to him, and had overcome the ſevereſt Trials. 'Tis upon this Account, that St. *Paul* alledges the Example of *Abel*, of *Enoch*, of *Noah*, of *Abraham*, and of *Sarah*; to which he adds, thoſe of *Iſaac*, of *Jacob*, and of *Joſeph*, who, by the Bleſſings which they gave their Children, and by what they ſaid before their Death, ſhewed that they were convinced, that the Promiſes of God ſhould be fulfill'd.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THIS Chapter inſtructs us in the Nature of Faith and its Effects. St. *Paul* teaches us here, that Faith is a ſtrong and lively Perſwaſion of the Things that God has revealed to us; that it cauſes us to conſider them as preſent, though we don't yet ſee them; that it conſiſts in believing that there is a God, and that this God is the Rewarder of thoſe that ſerve Him; and laſtly, that we cannot be acceptable to Him without Faith. II. The Apoſtle teaches us, that true Faith does always produce theſe three Effects: Truſt in the Promiſes of God, Obedience to his Commandments, and Conſtancy in Afflictions. This is confirmed by the Examples of *Abel*, of *Enoch*, of *Noah*, and other *Patriarchs*; but it appears moſt illuſtriouſly in the Example of the Patriarch *Abraham*, who gave ſuch noble Proofs of his Reliance upon God's Promiſes, and of his prompt Obedience,

dience, by forſaking his native Country, and by conſenting to Sacrifice his Son *Iſaac*. Thus we ſee in this Chapter, that from the beginning of the World, and in all Ages, there have been pious and holy Perſons, who have ſhewn the Sincerity of their Faith, by obeying God in the moſt difficult Matters, and by truſting to his Promiſes. We do likewiſe learn here, that thoſe ancient Believers underwent very great Trials, living in the World like Strangers and Travellers; that they waited for a better Life, and looked for their Country in Heaven. Theſe Examples ought to make a ſtrong Impreſſion upon our Minds. 'Tis thus we ought to ſhew the Sincerity of our Faith, by depending on the Promiſes which God makes us in the Goſpel, by obeying and ſerving Him faithfully, by living like Strangers upon the Earth, and panting after our true Country which is in Heaven.

CHAP. XI. 23,——40.

ST. *Paul* continues to propoſe to the *Hebrews*, ſeveral Examples of the Faith, Piety, and Conſtancy of the Ancients. He ſpeaks of *Moſes*, of the Deliverance from *Egypt*, of the Reduction of the Land of *Canaan*, of the Judges, of the Prophet *Samuel*, of King *David*, and of divers Prophets and Martyrs, who by their Faith had done great Miracles, and had undergone with Conſtancy all kind of Torments, and even Death it ſelf.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. LET us ſeriouſly conſider theſe noble Inſtances of Faith, Patience, and Godlineſs, which are here ſet before our Eyes. Let us yield a particular Attention to the Behaviour of

of *Moſes*, who choſe rather to ſuffer with the People of God, than to enjoy the Advantages that were offer'd him in *Egypt*: This may teach us to renounce worldly Goods and Pleaſures, when they hinder us from doing our Duty; and let us prefer the Croſs of *Chriſt* to all the Delights of this Life, and of Sin: II. Let us, in the next place; reflect upon the many Miracles which thoſe who delivered the People of God wrought by their Faith, and upon the great Things which God has done at divers Times, by their Means, and for their ſakes. III. Thereby we may ſee, that Faith is of a great Efficacy, and that if we truſt in God, purſuant to his Word and Promiſes, nothing can hinder us from attaining to Salvation. But above all, we ſhould carefully obſerve the Account St. *Paul* gives us in this Chapter, of what the Prophets and ancient Martyrs ſuffered, of thoſe Perſecutions to which they were expoſed, and of the Conſtancy they ſhewed, under the cruel Puniſhments by which they ended their Lives. Let us remember for that Purpoſe, that God has favour'd us with Advantages, which thoſe who lived before the Coming of *Chriſt* did not enjoy, and that He has reſerved ſomething better for us; that therefore we are under much ſtricter Obligations to walk in the Footſteps of thoſe Holy and Illuſtrious Servants of God, to the End that by imitating their Faith, we may like them arrive at Perfection and Salvation.

CHAP. XII. 1,——13.

I. ST. *Paul* exhorts the *Hebrews*, to imitate the Example of the Faithful of the Old-Teſtament, which he had ſet before their Eyes in the preceeding Chapter, and eſpecially that

of

of *Chriſt*, and to ſuffer Afflictions with Patience. II. He inſtructs them in the Deſign for which God afflicts his Children, and of the Advantage that reſults from thence, and he encourages them by theſe Conſiderations to ſtrengthen themſelves, and to perſevere in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn from hence, I. That the Example of the Saints and true Believers, who formerly render'd themſelves acceptable to God by their Faith, Patience, and Obedience, ought Powerfully to incite us to do our Duty alſo; and this Example ſhould make ſo much the greater Impreſſion upon us, as God has endowed us with greater Lights and more Grace than the ancient Believers, and above all, as we have before our Eyes the Example of *Chriſt*, the Author and Finiſher of our Faith. II. The Apoſtle inſtructs us here, concerning the Nature of Afflictions, by telling us that we ought not to loſe Courage when the Lord reproves us; that God chaſtens whom He loves, that He does it for our Good, and to render us partakers of his Holineſs, and that Afflictions produce moſt wholeſome Effects. This Doctrine engages us to the two following Duties. The one is, neither to faint nor to murmur in Affliction, but to ſuffer it patiently, and even with Joy, of what kind ſoever it be; ſince it is God our Father that ſends, and ſince He only does it for our Good. The other Duty is, to anſwer the Ends which God propoſes to Himſelf by Afflicting us, to make a right Uſe of the Evils we undergo, and to place them to the Account of our Correction and Advancement in Holineſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII. 14,——29.

I. ST. *Paul* exhorts the *Hebrews* to Holineſs and Perſeverance in Faith, and adviſes them to ſhun every thing that might cauſe them to fall away from the Grace of God. II. He compares the Law with the Goſpel, and the Manner in which the Law was publiſhed, with the Manner of Promulgating the Goſpel; whereby he propoſes to ſhew, that thoſe who diſobey *Jeſus Chriſt*, are threaten'd with the ſevereſt Judgments of God.

Reflexions after the Reading.

LET us improve the Counſels and Warnings which St. *Paul* gave the *Hebrews* in the Words we have juſt now read. They teach us, I. That we are indiſpenſably obliged to live in Holineſs, and that without it, it will be impoſſible for us ever to ſee the Face of God. II. That we ought to labour with great Diligence to preſerve our ſelves in the Favour of God, and to take care that there be in us no ſeed of Unbelief and Rebellion that may cauſe us to loſe it. The Example of *Eſau* is a Leſſon to us to avoid Senſuality, and not to prefer the vain and frivolous Advantages of the World, before the everlaſting Goods which God offers us, leſt we be deprived of the Bleſſing of our heavenly Father. The Compariſon which the Apoſtle here makes between the Law and the Goſpel, obliges us to make theſe two Reflexions: The *firſt* is, that we live under a Covenant much more Excellent than that of the *Jews*, ſince we are Members of the Chriſtian Church, ſince the Goſpel has been preached to us by the Son of God himſelf, and confirmed by his own Blood; and ſince God calls

calls us to the Poſſeſſion of an infinite Glory with all the Saints. Theſe Conſiderations do ſtrictly oblige us to keep this Covenant, and fulfil all the Duties thereof. The *ſecond* Reflexion is, that tho' the Goſpel was not publiſhed with ſo terrible a Pomp as the Law was formerly upon Mount *Sinai*, and tho' we live under a Diſpenſation of Grace and Mercy, thoſe who ſhall deſpiſe the Voice of Chriſt, muſt expect much more ſevere Puniſhments than what were denounced againſt the *Jews*. 'Tis what St. *Paul* remarks, by ſaying: That *we ſhall not eſcape, if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh from Heaven:* —— *Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved:* —— *Let us ſerve God acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear, for our God is a conſuming Fire.*

CHAP. XIII.

IN this laſt Chapter, the Apoſtle, I. Exhorts Chriſtians to Charity, Chaſtity, content of Mind, and truſt in God. II. He recommends to them to remember their Guides, and not to be drawn away from the pure Doctrine he had taught them, nor be brought under ſubjection to the legal Ceremonies, nor to fear Perſecution. III. He preſcribes to them the Duties of Praiſe, of Benificence, and ſubmiſſion to their Paſtors. IV. And *Laſtly*, He recommends himſelf to their Prayers, and prays for their Sanctification.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Duties preſcribed in this Chapter are the following. I. To love one another as Brethren; to exerciſe Charity and Hoſpitality, and to take care of thoſe that ſuffer Per-

Perſecution for the Goſpel. II. To live in Chaſtity, whether in a ſingle or married State; to have an abhorrence for all kind of Uncleanneſs, remembring that God will one Day judge the Impure. III. To flee Covetouſneſs, to be content with our Condition, and always to relie upon the Providence of God. IV. To remember that the Character of Chriſtians, and Faith in Chriſt crucified, call us to take up our Croſs, and to live in this World, as thoſe who *have no continuing City here, but ſeek one to come.* V. Never to neglect the Duty of Praiſe and Thankſgivings, no more than that of Bountifulneſs and Alms, both of them being moſt pleaſing Sacrifices to God. VI. And *Laſtly*, To obey our Paſtors, and to be ſubject to them, as thoſe who watch for our Souls, and to pray continually for them. Let us ſeriouſly meditate upon all theſe Leſſons, and put them in Practice, and let us pray *the God of Peace, to make us perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in us that which is well-pleaſing in his Sight, through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be Glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

St. JAMES.

THIS Epiſtle, and the following, are called Catholick, that is to ſay, Univerſal or General, becauſe they were writ to Chriſtians in general, and not to ſome particular Perſons or Churches. This of St. *James* is directed to the *Jews* of the Twelve Tribes, who were diſperſed in divers Countrys, but had embraced the Chriſtian Religion. The Deſign of it is, to ſtrengthen them againſt Perſecutions, and chiefly againſt certain falſe Teachers, and certain Hypocrites, who profeſſing themſelves Chriſtians, and boaſting that they knew more than others, lived in Sin and Licentiouſneſs.

CHAP. I.

I. THE Apoſtle here exhorts the Believers to rejoice in Afflictions, and to ſeek by Prayer for that Aſſiſtance which they ſtood in need of, to undergo them. II. He comforts

those

those Christians who were in Adversity, and despised by the World, and he exhorts the Rich to be humble. III. He speaks against those who maintained that God inclined Men to Sin; and against those false Teachers, and proud and hypocritical Persons, who condemned others, and contented themselves to hear the Word of God, without observing what it directed them; he shews, that the Religion of such Persons is vain, and he teaches, that true Religion consists in the Practice of Deeds of Charity, and in the Renunciation of the World.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter contains several Instructions, which ought to be most seriously weighed and considered. I. The *first* is, that Afflictions, and particularly those which we suffer for the Gospel, ought to be an Occasion of Joy to all Christians, since they serve to try them, to render them perfect, and to make them obtain the Crown of Life, which God has promised to those that love Him. II. That God never refuses his Grace and spiritual Gifts to such as ask them of Him with Faith. III. That those true Believers, who are but in a mean Station in this World, may boast of themselves in the Lord; and on the contrary, that rich and great Persons, ought to entertain Sentiments of Humility. IV. The Apostle declares, in the most positive manner, that God is by no means the Author of Sin, but that Sin does only proceed from our selves; and that God is so far from being the Cause of Sin, that He is the Author of all Good, since He has regenerated us by his Word, to the end that we may become new Creatures. V. St. *James* teaches us, that

it is not ſufficient to hear the Word of God, but that our great and principal Buſineſs is, to practiſe what it commands. VI. And *Laſtly*, We may learn from hence, that thoſe who think themſelves holy, and better than other Men, and yet do not govern their Tongue, are falſly Religious, and that ſolid Piety and true Religion do chiefly conſiſt in exerciſing Charity towards the Unhappy, and in preſerving our ſelves pure, ſo as not to be defiled by worldly Corruptions. Theſe are moſt wholſome Precepts: God grant us Grace to make a right Uſe of them.

CHAP. II.

THIS Chapter conſiſts of two Parts. I. St. *James* reproves thoſe who had regard to rich Men, and deſpiſed the Poor in the Aſſemblies of the Church. He ſhews, that Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt* did not allow theſe Kinds of Diſtinctions, ſince God has choſen the Poor, as well as the Rich, to give them the Kingdom of Heaven; and that the Law and the Goſpel, by which we are to be judged, is the Law of Charity and Liberty. II. In the ſecond Part, St. *James* confutes thoſe who maintained, that we can be juſtified by Faith in Chriſt without good Works; and he ſhews, by the very Nature of Faith, and by the Examples of *Abraham* and *Rahab*, that the Faith which is not attended with good Works is vain, and conſequently, can neither juſtifie, nor procure us Salvation.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN the firſt Part of this Chapter we are taught, I. That we ought not to have too little Conſideration for the Poor, nor too much for the Rich, ſince Faith and Piety may be met with in the Poor and Lowly, as well as in the Rich and Great; and ſince God has likewiſe choſen the Poor, who are rich in Faith, to make them Heirs in his Kingdom. II. That in the Aſſemblies of the Church, Chriſtians ought to ſhew, that they look upon one another as Brethren, and as Equals. III. That the Rich ought not to entertain Sentiments of Pride, nor deſpiſe or oppreſs the Poor. IV. That the Law of Chriſt, is a Law of Charity, of Humility, and true Liberty, and that God will judge us by that Law. V. That he who breaks the Law of God in one only Point, is no leſs Guilty in his Sight, than if he had broken all the Commandments; which teaches us, that the abandoning our ſelves to one only Sin, and the continuing in one only evil Cuſtom, is ſufficient to exclude us from Salvation. In the next Place, it is very important to obſerve, what St. *James* teaches concerning Juſtification, in the ſecond Part of this Chapter, and with what Strength he diſproves the impious Doctrine of thoſe falſe Chriſtians, who held, that we may be juſtified by Faith, without good Works. The Apoſtle ſhews, that true Faith is neceſſarily attended with good Works, and that the Faith which does not produce Works is vain and dead; and this is what he confirms by the Example of *Abraham*, who manifeſted the Sincerity of his Faith by his Obedience to God, in offering his Son *Iſaac*; as alſo by the Example of *Rahab*. From hence we may gather, that thoſe who

neglect good Works, and do not prove their Faith by a holy Life, and by Obedience to God's Commands, can by no means be juſtified, nor partake of Salvation.

CHAP. III.

I. ST. *James* forbids Chriſtians to ſet up themſelves for Teachers, and Maſters above others, or to condemn or ſpeak evil of other Perſons; and he repreſents what Miſchiefs and Diſorders the Tongue may produce. II. He ſays next, that Meekneſs, Forbearance, and love of Peace, are the Tokens by which true Chriſtians are to be diſtinguiſhed. We muſt obſerve, that what St. *James* ſays here, relates to certain Perſons, who thought themſelves more knowing and more perfect than others, who condemned with great Pride and Severity thoſe that were not of their Opinion, and who thereby troubled the Peace of the Church.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THIS Chapter treats firſt of the Sins into which the Tongue may cauſe us to fall, which therefore we ought moſt ſeriouſly to obſerve. St. *James* teaches us here, that the Tongue may be the Occaſion of numberleſs Evils, and oftentimes of incurable ones too; that we may ſin by Diſcourſe and Speeches, in infinite Ways againſt God, and againſt our Neighbour; that the Edification of the Church may be thereby deſtroyed, and that the Fire of Diviſion and Diſcord may be thereby kindled. This obliges us to regulate our Words by the Fear of God, and by Wiſdom, to ſpeak little, to avoid above all Slander and Calumny, and to abſtain from all Diſcourſes contrary to Charity

rity and Humility. This Duty is of great Importance, and St. *James* teaches us, that one of the ſureſt Tokens of true Piety is, to know how to govern ones Tongues and Language. II. The Apoſtle in this Chapter gives us another Mark, whereby to know Perſons, who are endowed with ſolid Piety and true Wiſdom; namely, Meekneſs and great Moderation in their Diſcourſe, and all their Behaviour. He declares with great earneſtneſs, that thoſe who think themſelves more knowing than others, but are Indiſcreet and Inſolent in their Words, or Paſſionate, and full of Envy and Pride, and that condemn others, and occaſion Diviſions, are only Hypocrites; he ſays, that wherever Malice and Slander prevailed, there was all kind of Evil; Laſtly, he teaches us that true Piety, which proceeds from Heaven, is Pure, Peaceable, Moderate, full of Mercy and good Fruits, ſincere, and without Hypocriſy. Let us ſtudy to acquire this true Wiſdom, to put on this Spirit of Meekneſs, Moderation, Sincerity and Peace, and we ſhall experience both in this World and the other what St. *James* ſays in the laſt Words of this Chapter: *That the Fruit of Righteouſneſs is ſown in Peace of them that make Peace.*

CHAP. IV.

ST. *James*, after having mention'd the Evils which the Tongue and the Spirit of Strife and Diſſention do produce, ſhews in this Chapter, I. That all theſe Diſorders proceed from carnal Paſſions, and particularly from the Love of Pleaſures, from Pride, from a deſire of Preeminence above others, and from a Spirit of Envy and Jealouſy. II. Becauſe of which, he exhorts thoſe in whom theſe Paſſions reign, to Humility and Repentance, and he particularly

forbids Slandering and raſh Judgments. III. And laſtly, he condemns thoſe who form Projects and Deſigns, without Reflecting upon the Vanity of Life, and without conſidering that they depend upon the Providence of God.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn here, I. That the Love of Pleaſure, Pride and Envy, are the principal Cauſes of thoſe Evils which Men do to one another, and of the Diviſions that prevail in the Church. Wherefore we ought to avoid thoſe Paſſions, and particularly the Love of the World, which is the ſpring thereof, as alſo Pride, remembering that it is not in vain that the Scripture ſays, that *whoſoever will be a Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God*; And that *God reſiſteth the Proud, but giveth Grace unto the Humble*. II. We ſee in this Chapter, that in order to draw near to God when we have departed from Him, we muſt be ſenſible of our Miſery, bewail our Faults, reſiſt Temptations, renounce the Diverſions of the World, and purifie our Heart and all our Actions, upon which Conditions, God will draw near to us. III. The Apoſtle teaches us, that Calumny is a great Sin, ſince he who ſpeaks Evil of his Brother, Judges and Condemns him, which belongs to none but God. IV. Let us remember in all our Deſigns, and particularly in thoſe of which the End is Intereſt and Advantage, that our Life is Short and Uncertain, that it vaniſhes away like Smoak; that it is therefore a great Folly to form remote Projects, counting upon the Duration of our own Life, and upon our own Induſtry, and that we ought to depend upon the Providence of God in all things. V. St. *James* teaches us farther, that it is not ſufficient for us to know our Du-

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ty, but that we ought to make a right Uſe of our Knowledge, which unleſs we do, we ſhall only become more guilty before God. It is the important Advice contained in theſe Words: *Therefore to him that knoweth to do Good, and doth it not, to him it is Sin.*

CHAP. V.

I. THE Apoſtle having ſpoken, in the foregoing Chapter, of thoſe who labour to heap up Riches, without conſidering that they depend upon Providence, denounces the Judgments of God againſt Rich and Covetous Men, againſt thoſe that live in Voluptuouſneſs, and againſt ſuch as oppreſs the Poor. II. He afterwards applys himſelf to Chriſtians that are in Sufferings; he exhorts them to wait with Patience for the Coming of the Lord, not to complain too bitterly againſt thoſe that did them Evil, and to avoid Swearing, and every thing that denoted Impatience. III. He ſhews laſtly, the Duty of thoſe that are in Affliction, and particularly that of Sick People. He ſays, that the Sick ſhould be cured by the Prayers of the Paſtors of the Church, and after being Anointed with Oyl, which was a Ceremony practiſed by the Order of *Chriſt* in thoſe times, and by the Means whereof God wrought miraculous Cures. He ſpeaks likewiſe of the Efficacy of Prayer, and of the Fruits of Brotherly Reproof.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT has been read, ought to be a Warning, I. To the Rich, ſince St. *James* threatens with the Curſes of God all thoſe rich Men that are Covetous, Unjuſt, and that make uſe of their Wealth to live in Pomp and Luxury; thoſe

those to whom God has given Wealth, ought carefully to avoid Covetousness, Unjustice, and Pleasures, and to consider for that purpose, the Vanity of Riches, the Temptations to which they expose Men, and the terrible Misfortunes into which all those fall, who set their Heart upon them, or make a wrong Use of them. II. The Apostle shews, the Duty of Righteous Men when they are in Affliction; it is to suffer without Complaint and Murmuring, to wait with Patience till the Lord shall please to deliver them; to meditate continually upon the Sufferings of the Saints, and upon the happy issue which God is wont to grant them. III. This Chapter teaches us, that all vain and rash Oaths, let them be what they will, are absolutely forbid to Christians, as well as all hasty and wrathful Expressions. IV. We see that those who are afflicted, ought to seek for comfort in Prayer, and particularly, that sick Persons should call their Pastors to pray with them, and that the Confession of Sins and Prayer, when performed with zeal, are of great Weight in the Sight of God. We may learn from the last Words of this Epistle, that the Advices and Warnings which are given to those who live in Sin and Error, are of a very great Advantage, since thereby we deliver a Soul from Death, and even obtain from God the Forgiveness of our own Sins. God grant us the Grace to remember carefully these Instructions, and to observe them faithfully.

I. St. *Peter*.

THIS Epiſtle was writ to the Believers, as well among the diſperſed *Jews*, as among the *Gentiles* that were in the Provinces of *Aſia minor*; and it tends to confirm them in Faith and Holineſs. It contains ſeveral very weighty Inſtructions, and is one of the fineſt Books in the New Teſtament.

CHAP. I.

ST. *Peter*, in this Chapter, praiſes God for having called Chriſtians to Salvation by *Jeſus Chriſt*. He ſays, that this hope of Salvation ſupported the Faithful, and even filled them with joy in the midſt of Afflictions and Perſecutions; and he ſhews them how happy they were to know Chriſt, and to be Witneſſes of the Accompliſhment of the Prophecies in his Goſpel. II. He exhorts them, by divers Motives,

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to Holineſs, and to a Life worthy of their Calling.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Chapter, we are engaged to two principal Duties. I. To render fervent and continual Thanks to God for his having choſen us to Salvation; for his having given us, by the Reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſuch a firm and glorious Hope of Immortality, and for having granted us the Happineſs of knowing what was concealed from the ancient Prophets, and of ſeeing, in the Goſpel, the Accompliſhment of thoſe Promiſes which the Prophets had made concerning the Coming of the Meſſiah, and the Redemption of Mankind. II. St. *Peter* teaches us, that all theſe glorious Advantages oblige us to lead a pure and holy Life. 'Tis what he exhorts us to, by repreſenting that God has delivered us from the Ignorance and Corruption in which Men were involv'd when they knew not Chriſt; that as God, who has called us, is holy, we ought likewiſe to be holy in our whole Behaviour; that the God whom we invoke as a Father, is likewiſe our Judge, and will render to all of us according to our Works; that we have been redeemed and conſecrated to God by the precious Blood of Chriſt. And, *Laſtly*, that we have received a new Birth by the Preaching of the Goſpel, which is the Word of the Living God, and remains for ever. Theſe are powerful inducements to a holy and Chriſtian Life; let us have them continually before our Eyes, and let us beſeech God to render them efficacious in our Hearts, by the Power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

I. ST. *Peter* exhorts Christians to live in Innocence, to grow in the Knowledge and Grace of *Jesus Christ*, to cleave to Him more and more by Faith, and the Imitation of his Life, so that being united to Him, and among themselves, by Charity, they may altogether compose one Church, which might be as a Temple devoted to the Lord; to engage them to which, he sets before their Eyes on one Hand, the Unhappiness of Unbelievers who rejected Christ; and on the other, the incomparable Favour that God had done them, to choose them to be his People, and Persons consecrated to his Service and Glory. II. He exhorts them next, to renounce the Desires of the Flesh, and to edifie the *Gentiles* by their good Behaviour, and to submit themselves to Kings and Magistrates. He recommends to Christian Slaves, who served Heathen Masters, to be in subjection to them, and to bear with Patience whatever was uneasie in their Condition; upon which Occasion, he speaks of the Obligation Christians were under to imitate the Patience of *Jesus Christ*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE learn in this Chapter, I. That the Character of Christians, and of those who are truly Children of God, is Innocence, Meekness, Simplicity, Sincerity, and a real Aversion to Wickedness and Hypocrisie, and a continual Desire of Advancing in the Favour of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. II. We ought to make very serious Reflexions upon what St. *Peter* says here, that the Faithful are as so many living Stones,

Stones, who compoſe a holy Temple, in which there be offer'd ſpiritual Sacrifices agreeable to God through *Jeſus Chriſt*, and that the Church is an Aſſembly of choſen People, and a Kingdom of Prieſts. This engages us to conſider carefully, the Glory of our Condition, and to acknowledge the great Goodneſs of God, in chooſing us for his People, who were formerly miſerable Heathens. This ſhews likewiſe, that Chriſtians are Perſons wholly conſecrated to the Service and Glory of God. Let us therefore anſwer, as we ought, to a Calling ſo holy as ours is, by manifeſting the Virtues of Him who has called us from Darkneſs to his marvellous Light. Let us on this Account, as St. *Peter* exhorts us, *Abſtain from carnal Luſts, that war againſt the Soul*, remembering that we are *Strangers and Pilgrims here upon Earth.* Let us edifie all Men by a wiſe and innocent Behaviour; let us fear God; let us reverence and ſubmit our ſelves to all our Superiours; and *Laſtly*, let us let us ſuffer patiently all the Evils that may be brought upon us, and let us always ſet before our ſelves the Example of our Redeemer, who being never guilty of any Sin, did notwithſtanding ſuffer with ſo wonderful a Patience; who, *when he was reviled, reviled not again*; and who has thereby left us an Example and a Pattern, that we ſhould follow his Steps.

CHAP. III.

I. ST. *Peter* deſcribes the Duty of Chriſtian Women, and likewiſe ſhews that of Huſbands towards their Wives. II. He exhorts all Chriſtians to love one another, and to live in Peace and Innocency, repreſenting to them that it is the Way to be happy, even in the midſt of Perſecutions. III. To engage Chriſtians to ſuf-

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fer patiently the Evils to which the Profeſſion of the Goſpel expoſes them, he tells them what Chriſt had ſuffer'd to atone for the Sins of Mankind, and to bring to God the *Gentiles* and People who were in Bondage to Sin and Ignorance, but who, by coming into the Church by Baptiſm, and by being new Creatures, were ſaved, as *Noah* and his Family had been formerly in the Ark from the Flood.

Reflexions after the Reading.

1. ST. *Peter* exhorts Chriſtian Women to be ſubject to their Husbands, to behave with great Meekneſs, to avoid Luxury and Immodeſty in their Apparel, and to adorn themſelves inwardly with a pure, gentle, and peaceful Spirit, which is of great Value in the ſight of God; and he exhorts Husbands to love their Wives, and to behave with Prudence towards them. II. All Chriſtians in general, are here excited to mutual Love, are taught never to wrong any Body, nor to revenge themſelves, but to live in Peace with all the World. St. *Peter* tells us, after *David*, that this is the Way to render God propitious to us, and even to lead a more eaſie Life, to pacifie our Enemies, and to be happy when we are perſecuted. III. We ſee in this Chapter, that one of the principal Duties of Chriſtians is, to make a ſincere Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, to keep a good Conſcience, and to be always ready to give an account of our Faith with Meekneſs and Reſpect upon all Occaſions that offer themſelves. IV. Towards the end of this Chapter, St. *Peter* teaches us, that Chriſt ſuffered and roſe again, to redeem Men from the Slavery of Sin; and that as *Noah* was formerly ſaved in the Ark, we are likewiſe

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ſaved by Baptiſm, which procures us an admittance into the Church of God. This Doctrine teaches us, that we cannot attain to Salvation but by Faith in Chriſt; that it is neceſſary to make a publick Profeſſion of that Faith in Baptiſm, but that Baptiſm is not ſufficient to ſave us, if it be not accompanied with a pure Conſcience. And *Laſtly*, That thoſe who obey not the Goſpel, ſhall periſh in their Unbelief, like the Inhabitants of the old World, who did not lay hold of the Patience and Forbearance of God, nor hearken to the Preaching of *Noah*, for which Reaſon, they periſhed in the Waters of the Flood.

CHAP. IV.

ST. *Peter* teaches in this Chapter, I. That the Sufferings of *Jeſus Chriſt* oblige Chriſtians to renounce the Errors in which they lived before their Converſion to the Chriſtian Religion, and particularly, the impure and diſſolute Life of the *Gentiles*, and to live in Sobriety and Godlineſs, waiting for the Coming of our Lord. II. That Chriſtians ought above all Things to keep up great Charity among one another, and each one to employ, to the Glory of God, the different Gifts they have received from Him. III. That, far from being amazed and diſcouraged at the Sufferings they underwent for the Goſpel, they ſhould account them very Honourable; and that thoſe who perſecuted the Faithful, and oppoſed the Goſpel, would not eſcape the righteous Judgment of God.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter contains ſeveral very wholſome Inſtructions. I. That the Conſideration of what Chriſt ſuffer'd, engages us very ſtrongly to renounce Sin, and the Deſires of the Fleſh, and particularly to avoid Impurity and Intemperance. II. That thoſe who profeſs to fear God, ought not to think it ſtrange if they be blamed by worldly Men for not living like them, nor be moved either by their Example or Contempt. III. The third Leſſon is, always to ſet before our Eyes the laſt Coming of our Lord, to be prepared for it by a ſober Life, by diligence in Prayer, and by the Practice of the Duties of Charity. IV. That we ought every one of us to make uſe of the different Talents we have received from God, whether they be temporal or ſpiritual, for his Glory, and for the Advantage of our Neighbour, and it is what they who have any Calling or Office in the Church are particularly obliged to. *Laſtly*, St. *Peter* teaches us, that 'tis both Honourable and Joyous to ſuffer as a Chriſtian; and that if the Faithful and Righteous are expoſed to ſo many Evils, Unbelievers and wicked Men may expect much more terrible Puniſhments. This ſhould encourage Chriſtians to endure patiently, and even with Gladneſs, all the Evils which the Profeſſion of the Goſpel brings upon them from the Wicked; it ſhould inſpire all with a wholſome Fear, and excite us more and more to Piety, and a Life worthy our Calling, and of the Glory that is reſerved for us in Heaven.

CHAP. V.

ST. *Peter* exhorts in this Chapter, I. Paſtors to diſcharge their Duty. II. Young People to be in Submiſſion to their Teachers, and to be humble. III. All Chriſtians in general to live in Sobriety and Watchfulneſs, and to reſiſt the Temptations of the Devil. IV. He concludes his Epiſtle by Wiſhes and Salutations.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter deſcribes, I. The Duty of Paſtors, and the glorious Reward they will receive from the Lord *Jeſus*, if they faithfully diſcharge the Functions of their Miniſtry. This ought to engage thoſe who are in that Office, to ſerve God with Integrity, to feed the Flocks of the Lord, to watch carefully over the Sheep with which they are intruſted, and to exerciſe their Charge, not with conſtraint, nor with a view of Pride or Intereſt, but with Affection and Willingneſs, and after ſuch a manner, as to become Patterns to their Flocks. II. St. *Peter* adviſes young People, that ſubmiſſion to their Paſtors belongs particularly to their Age; and all Chriſtians in general may learn from hence, that Humility is one of the principal Virtues of Chriſtianity, ſince *God reſiſteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.* III. The Apoſtle puts us in mind, that we are expoſed to the Temptations of the Devil, and to various Dangers, from which we can't be ſecured but by ſobriety, by vigilance, and continuing ſtedfaſt in the Faith. *Laſtly*, The Prayer with which St. *Peter* concludes this Chapter, teaches us, that the Chriſtian

ſtian Profeſſion, and the Hopes of eternal Glory, oblige us to aſpire more and more to Perfection; and that the Means of Attaining thereto is, to truſt in God, and to implore the continual Help of his Grace. Let us beg it, each of us for himſelf, and for one another; and let us beſeech *the God of all Grace, who has called us to his eternal Glory by Chriſt Jeſus, to make us perfect, to ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, and ſettle us; to Him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever.* Amen.

II. St. *PETER.*



ST. *Peter* writ this Epiſtle a little before his Death, about the Year of *Chriſt* 64, to confirm the Faithful in the Purity of Doctrine and Practice of good Works, and to prevent their being led away by falſe Teachers, who to the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity joyned a carnal Life; and by prophane Perſons, that called in queſtion the ſecond Coming of *Chriſt*. This is a moſt excellent Epiſtle as well as the foregoing, and is writ with great Strength and Majeſty.

CHAP. I.

I. ST. *Peter* in this Chapter ſhews, that God having given us all that is neceſſary to live in Holineſs, we ought to join to our Faith the Practice of Chriſtian Virtues, and that this is the only Means to enter into the Kingdom of God. II. He next repreſents to the Faithful, that

that he exhorted them after this Manner, becauſe he foreſaw that he ſhould be ſoon taken away from them by Death. III. And laſtly, He proves the Truth of the Goſpel, by the Transfiguration of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and by the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter teaches us, I. That ſince God of his Goodneſs and Power has furniſhed us with all things needful for a ſpiritual Life, and for Godlineſs, and ſince He has given us ſuch excellent Promiſes, we ſhall be inexcuſable if we do not renounce the Corruptions of the World, and if we do not live in Holineſs. II. That we muſt joyn to Faith, Prudence, Temperance, Patience, Holineſs, Brotherly Love, Charity, and all other Chriſtian Virtues; and endeavour to confirm our Calling and Election by good Works, to the End that we may thereby ſecure an Entrance into the Kingdom of God; but he tells us farther, that thoſe who neglect ſuch Duties are Blind, and will periſh in their Sins. III. The Care St. *Peter* took to warn Chriſtians before his Death, ſhews that they who can be uſeful to their Neighbours, ought to endeavour it whilſt they are in this World, and to double their Zeal, as their End draws nigh. IV. We ſee that St. *Peter* proves the Truth and Divinity of the Chriſtian Doctrine, by the Teſtimony which he and his Companions had render'd, of that which happened to our Lord when He was Transfigured, and by the Prophecies of the Old-Teſtament. This obliges us ſeriouſly to attend to the ſaid Proofs, and carefully to read and meditate the Goſpel and Writings of the Apoſtles and the Prophets. As to the Prophecies, we ſhould conſider particularly, that they were formerly

obſcure, and not eaſy to be explained, but that at preſent they are very clear, and very proper to confirm us in the Faith, and in our Obedience to the Doctrine and Precepts of *Jeſus Chriſt* our Saviour.

CHAP. II.

I. THE Apoſtle foretels that falſe Teachers ſhould ariſe, who would introduce pernicious Sects and Doctrines; and he ſhews by the Puniſhment of the wicked Angels, by the Flood, and by the Deſtruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, that thoſe Deceivers, and they who followed them, ſhould not remain unpuniſhed. II. In the next Place, he deſcribes theſe falſe Teachers, by ſaying that they were ſenſual Perſons, and ſuch as ſpeak evil of the Powers; that they were Unclean, addicted to Covetouſneſs, full of Pride, vain and deceitful in their Words, ſeducers of the Simple by their falſe Promiſes of Liberty; and he ſhews that they involved in the greateſt Miſeries all thoſe that hearken'd to them, and that ſuffered themſelves to be led away by their Diſcourſes.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may learn from hence, I. That there were in all times, and always will be, falſe Teachers, who endeavour to introduce dangerous Doctrines, and to form Sects and Parties in the Church. Wherefore we muſt not be ſurprized, if the like ſhould ſtill happen; however, we ought to ſtand upon our Guard againſt ſuch People, for fear of being miſled by them. II. This Chapter ſhews us, that God has in all Ages diſplay'd the Marks of his Juſtice; as it appears more particularly by the Puniſhment of the

the rebellious Angels, by the Flood, and by the Deſtruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. Theſe Examples teach us, as the Apoſtle ſays, that *the Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of Temptations, and to reſerve the Unjuſt unto the Day of Judgment to be puniſhed: But chiefly them that walk after the Fleſh, in the Luſt of Uncleanneſs*, &c. III. We are to give a particular Attention to the Characters by which the Apoſtle repreſents theſe falſe Teachers, telling us, that they are proud People, Enemies to Government, Covetous, vain in their Diſcourſes, and above all, addicted to Senſuality and Pleaſures: This ſhews us, that we ought to ſhun thoſe in whom we find theſe Characters, as dangerous Perſons, and that we ought chiefly to abominate all the Doctrines that have a Tendency to theſe Vices, and which ſooth the Irregularity of our Manners. By which we may likewiſe perceive, that it is the Corruption of the Heart and of the Paſſions which commonly engage Men in Error. IV. Thoſe to whom God has given Knowledge and Grace, ought to improve what they learn in this Chapter, namely, that when having received theſe Advantages, they ſuffer themſelves to be overcome by the Pollutions of the World, their laſt Condition will be worſe than the firſt; and that it were better for them never to have known the Way of Righteouſneſs, than to turn aſide from it after having known it. This is moſt wholeſome advice, and ſuch as ought to induce even good People to a Fear attended with Watchfulneſs and Precaution, and a ſtrict Perſeverance in Godlineſs.

CHAP. III.

1. THE Apoſtle foretels that there ſhould be in the Church profane Men, who

would doubt of the ſecond Coming of *Chriſt*, whom he confutes by ſaying, that as the World was formerly deſtroyed by the Waters of the Flood, it would likewiſe one Day periſh by Fire; and that if the Coming of *Chriſt* were retarded, it was becauſe God would give Men time to repent. II. He ſhews that the Belief and Expectation of the End of all Things, and the Hopes of being received into the World to come, oblige us to unwearied endeavours after Holineſs and Perfection.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter treats, I. of the Coming of *Chriſt* and of the end of the World; and, II. of the Effect which this laſt Doctrine ought to produce in us. Upon the former of theſe Articles we ought to conſider, that ſince it has been foretold, that there would be in the laſt Times Scoffers, who would deny the moſt certain and moſt important Truths of Religion, we ought not to be ſurprized if there be ſome in our Times, but wherever we find them, to ſhun them as the moſt dangerous and worſt of Men. II. That it is likewiſe moſt certain, that the World muſt have an End, of which we have a ſure Proof in the Flood, which is a Fact undeniably and univerſally acknowledged; and that if God delays this End of the World, and the laſt Judgment, 'tis through an Effect of his Goodneſs towards Men, and to allow them time to repent, which ſhould excite us to lay hold of the Forbearance and Patience of the Lord. III. St *Peter* teaches us, that as the World was formerly deſtroyed by Water, it will be conſumed at the laſt Day by Fire; and the Deſcription which is here made of this End of the World, ſhews us what will be the Majeſty and Terror

Terror of the laſt Appearance of the Son of God. As for the Effect which this Doctrine ſhould produce, the Apoſtle tells us, that ſince we know that this World is to be deſtroyed, and that there will be new Heavens and a new Earth, in which Righteouſneſs will dwell, we cannot apply our ſelves with too great earneſtneſs to a holy Life, and to perform Works of Piety, ſo as not to be ſurprized by that Day, and to be then found by the Lord without ſpot or blemiſh. Let us therefore never forget theſe Inſtructions; and *ſeeing we know theſe things before, let us beware leſt we alſo be led away with the Error of the Wicked, and fall from our own Steadfaſtneſs. But let us grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: To whom be Glory both now and for ever.* Amen.

I. St. *JOHN.*

THE Deſign of this Epiſtle is, to ſecure Chriſtians from being ſeduced by certain falſe Teachers, who denied that Chriſt was come in the Fleſh, and that He was the Son of God, and who lived in Licentiouſneſs. St. *John* eſtabliſhes in this Epiſtle, the Truth of the Goſpel, and the Neceſſity of believing in *Jeſus Chriſt*, and of living in Holineſs, and eſpecially in Charity.

CHAP. I.

I. THE Apoſtle teaches us in this Chapter, that neither he himſelf, nor the other Apoſtles, had preached any thing concerning Chriſt the Son of God, but what they had ſeen and heard themſelves. II. He ſhews next, that the Aim and Subſtance of the Chriſtian Doctrine is,

is, that as God is Light and Holineſs it ſelf, none but thoſe who walk in Holineſs, who ſincerely confeſs their Sins, and forſake them, have any Communion with God and with Chriſt.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt Inſtruction we meet with in this Chapter, relates to the Truth of the Goſpel, which appears by the certainty of the Evidence of the Apoſtles, who preached nothing but what they had ſeen, heard, and as it were touched with their Fingers. II. We obſerve here, that the Deſign of the Chriſtian Religion is, to render Men like God by Holineſs. St. *John* declares moſt expreſly, that thoſe who boaſt of being in the Communion of God, and *Jeſus Chriſt*, and yet remain in Sin, are Liars, and do not act with ſincerity; and that there are none but thoſe who walk in the Light, that is to ſay, who lead a pure Life, that have Communion with God. III. He teaches, that as all Men were Sinners, and that God had ſent his Son to ſave them, there was no other Means to partake of the Effects of the Mercy of God, and of the Efficacy of the Blood of *Jeſus Chriſt*, than ſincerely to confeſs and forſake their Sins.

CHAP. II.

ST. *John* teaches us in this Chapter, I. That Chriſt had attoned for our Sins; but that none but ſuch as keep his Commandments, have any ſhare in that Attonement. II. He ſays, that the chief Commandment of our Lord is, to love one another, and that thoſe who do not love their Neighbour, are in Darkneſs and in Death. III. He extends his Exhortations to Chri-

Chriſtians of all Ages, but particularly to young People, recommending to them not to love the World. IV. He adviſes the Faithful not to ſuffer themſelves to be ſeduced by Impoſtors and Antichriſts, who denied that *Jeſus* was the Chriſt, and the Son of God; and that they ſhould ſtedfaſtly retain the pure Doctrine, and the Truth which was taught them from the Beginning.

Reflexions after the Reading.

ST. *John* teaches us here, I. That our Lord makes Interceſſion with God for us, and that He has attoned for the Sins of all Mankind; but that the Token by which He owns thoſe that believe in Him, and love Him, is, obedience to his Commands; and that the chief Duty of Chriſtians is, to imitate their Saviour, and to live as He lived. II. That among the Commandments of Chriſt, that which has the firſt Place, and to which all the reſt may be reduced, is the Love of our Neighbour; that they in whom this Love is found, are in the Light, and there is no occaſion of Stumbling in them; but that thoſe who do not love their Brother, are in Darkneſs, and in a State of Condemnation. III. The Apoſtle teaches us, that the Doctrine of Chriſt engages Chriſtians of all Ages, and all Conditions, and particularly young Perſons, to ſtrengthen themſelves more and more in the Love of God, and of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and to renounce the Love of the World; and that the Love of Riches, of Pleaſures, and of Glory, is by no means conſiſtent with the Love of God. This is what young People ought moſt ſeriouſly to conſider of, in order to avoid the Temptations to which their Age expoſes them, remembering for this purpoſe, that *the World paſſeth away*,

away, and the Luſts thereof; but he that doth the Will of God abideth for ever. IV. The Warnings St. *John* gives in this Chapter, to beware of thoſe falſe Teachers that do not acknowledge *Jeſus* for the Son of God, and for the *Meſſiah*, teach us, that we ought to ſhun all thoſe who ſpread Doctrines contrary to the Goſpel; that Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt* is abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation; and that to the End we be not led away by Error, we ought inviolably to adhere to the Doctrine taught from the Beginning by *Chriſt*, and by the Apoſtles; But St. *John* informs us likewiſe at the ſame Time, that Faith in *Chriſt* engages us to live Righteouſly and Holy, to the End, that when He ſhall appear, we may have entire Confidence, and not be confounded by his Preſence at his Coming.

CHAP. III.

IN this Chapter St. *John* ſpeaks, I. Of the Love which God has ſhewn us in Adopting us for his Children, and of the Glory He has reſerved for us. He ſays, II. That this Grace which God has granted us, obliges us to purifie our ſelves, and that the End of *Chriſt*'s Coming, was to withdraw Men from Sin, and to render them Righteous and Holy. III. He treats particularly, about the Love of our Neighbour, he ſhews how neceſſary that Virtue is, as well as the Nature and Effects thereof, and he adds, that the ſureſt Way to obtain Peace of Conſcience is, to be filled with Confidence before God, and to Love one another ſincerely.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter, which is one of the beſt in the Teſtament, engages us, I. To celebrate

lebrate the Love of God our Father, who has adopted us for his Children, and to conſider carefully the Advantages of our Adoption, and the Glory with which the Children of God will be crowned at the Coming of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*. II. The Apoſtle teaches us, that thoſe who have ſuch glorious Hopes purifie themſelves. He declares in the ſtrongeſt Manner, that *Chriſt* is come to aboliſh Sin; that therefore thoſe who commit Sin, do not know Him to Salvation; that the infallible Token by which we diſtinguiſh the Children of God from the Children of the Devil is, that the Children of God do not live in Sin, and that thoſe who do live and perſevere in it, are the Children of the Devil. This is what all of us ought moſt ſeriouſly to reflect upon. III. We ſee here, that the Love of our Neighbour is the True Character of Chriſtians, and that thoſe in whom this Love is not found, and who hate their Brother, are Murderers like *Cain*, and remain under Condemnation, and in Death. IV. St. *John* inſtructs us concerning the Nature and Effects of true Charity, by ſaying, that it ought not only to conſiſt in Words, but that it ſhould be ſincere and hearty, that it ſhould incline us to aſſiſt our Brethren, and if it were neceſſary, even to lay down our Lives for them, as *Chriſt* gave his for us. Laſtly, The Apoſtle teaches us, that it is by diſcharging theſe Duties that we ſhall be able to diſcover whether we are in the Truth and in the Love of God, and to have Peace of Conſcience, and a firm Aſſurance of obtaining from Him whatſoever we ask of Him.

CHAP. IV.

ST. *John* adviſes Chriſtians not to believe all kinds of Spirits, that is to ſay, all thoſe who pretend to be inſpired by the Spirit of God; but

but to try the Doctrines, to know whether they proceed from Him or not; and he lays down the following Rules for diſcovering the ſame: I. The *firſt* is, that thoſe who don't confeſs that *Jeſus Chriſt* came in the Fleſh, and was the *Meſſiah*, ought to be rejected as People animated with the Spirit of the World, and with Error, but not with the Spirit of Truth. II. The *ſecond* is, that Religion conſiſts in Charity, which the Apoſtle proves by repreſenting the greatneſs of the Love which God has ſhewn in giving us his Son; from whence he concludes, that thoſe who are not animated by a Spirit of Charity, don't love God, nor belong to Him, and conſequently ought not to be heard.

Reflexions after the Reading.

CHRISTIANS may learn from hence, I. Not to receive all kind of Doctrines, but to examine them, to know whether they come from God or not. II. That it is one of the fundamental Truths of Religion, to believe that *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt*, and the Son of God, and that He was made Man for our Salvation. III. That Charity is the Abſtract and Eſſence of Religion, and the chief Token of Chriſtianity. 'Tis what St. *John* repeats divers Times, and what he eſtabliſhes upon this Principle, that God is Charity it ſelf, and upon the Love which He has made appear towards Men, by ſending his Son to give them Life. By this we may diſcover, that Charity is entirely neceſſary, and that thoſe who are void of it, do not know God as they ſhould know Him, nor do any way belong to Him; this St. *John* declares moſt expreſly. This likewiſe ſhews us, that in order to be excited to Charity, we ſhould meditate upon the Nature and Perfections of God, who is all Love, and upon

on that great Goodneſs He has manifeſted to us, in giving his Son to make an Attonement for our Sins; ſince God has thus firſt loved us, we ought to love Him moſt fervently, and to love one another, remembering what St. *John* ſaid: *That if any one ſays he, loves God, and hates his Brother, he is a Liar.* Let us be therefore more and more confirmed in the Love of God and of Charity, to the End, that ſo bearing the Image of our heavenly Father, we may have Confidence at the Day of Judgment, and not be terrified at the Coming of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt.*

CHAP. V.

I. ST. *John* continues to ſhew, that the true Children of God are known by the Pureneſs of their Faith, by the Obedience they pay to his Commandments, and by Charity. II. He teaches that the Truth of the Goſpel was confirmed from Heaven, by the Teſtimony of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; and upon the Earth, by the Spirit, by Water, and by Blood, that is to ſay, by the divine Power with which Chriſt was inveſted, and which He has ſpread over the Apoſtles, and thoſe that believe in Him; by the Purity and Holineſs of his Life, and that of his Diſciples, and by his Sufferings, as well as by thoſe of the Martyrs. From whence he concludes, that the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and the Promiſes of eternal Life, which are made us there in *Jeſus Chriſt*, ought to be received with a full certainty of Faith. III. St. *John* ſays, that thoſe who had ſuch Faith were ſure of obtaining from God all they ſhould ask of Him according to his Will, even the Health and Life of their Brethren, which at that Time

Time, was another moſt convincing Proof of the Divinity of the Goſpel, unleſs thoſe for whom they ſhould pray had committed certain Sins, which God thought fit to puniſh by a temporal Death. IV. The Apoſtle finiſhes this Epiſtle, by exhorting the Faithful to keep themſelves pure, to continue ſtedfaſt in the Faith, and to avoid Idolatry.

Reflexions after the Reading.

FROM this Reading we may gather, I. That none are the true Children of God, but thoſe who believe in his Son, who love their Neighbour, and who keep his Commandments. II. That the Keeping of God's Commandments is not a difficult nor painful thing, but that, on the contrary, by the Help of the Love of God, and by Faith, we may eaſily overcome the World and Temptations. III. That ſince the Divinity of the Goſpel has been confirmed after ſo authentic a manner in Heaven and upon Earth, we ſhall remain without excuſe, if we don't receive its Doctrine as Divine and Heavenly, and if we don't obſerve the Duties it preſcribes. IV. That thoſe who do the Will of God, are ſure to be heard by Him, and that their Prayers have great Efficacy, unleſs they ſhould ask ask certain temporal Bleſſings, which He does not think fit to grant them; this is a moſt precious Advantage, and which ought moſt ſtrongly to excite us to obey and love God. V. St. *John* tells us, that thoſe who are Children of God do not ſin, that the Wicked One has no Power over them, and

that they keep themſelves pure, knowing that they belong to God, and that the whole World is in Sin and Corruption. Let us therefore endeavour after Purity and true Holineſs, to the end, that by this means we may have ſaving Communion with God our Father, and his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is the true God, and Life eternal; to whom be Glory for ever. *Amen.*



II. St. *JOHN.*

ST. *John* writes this Epiſtle to a Chriſtian Lady, and to the Church which was in her Houſe; he exhorts her to perſevere in the Truth, and in Charity, to ſhun falſe Teachers, and to have no Dealing with them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THAT which is to be obſerved in this Epiſtle, for our Inſtruction, is, I. The Zeal and Piety of that Lady, to whom St. *John* writes. This is an Example which chiefly concerns Chriſtian Women, and which teaches them to adhere to Godlineſs, and to cauſe it to reign in their Families, as the ſaid Lady did, of whom St. *John* gives ſo advantageous a Teſtimony. II. We ſee here, that all thoſe who know the Truth, and love it ſincerely, do alſo

love one another heartily, and join to the Knowledge of Truth, Obedience to the Commandments of God, and to the Practice of Charity. III. St. *John* teaches us, that it is not enough to have begun well, but that we must perſevere to the end, ſo as not to loſe the Fruits of what we have done, but be qualified to receive a full Reward thereof. IV. The laſt Inſtruction ſhews, what we are to do with reſpect to thoſe that teach falſe Doctrines, namely, not to receive them as Brethren and Chriſtians, but to avoid their Company, and any Correſpondence with them, and to depart and ſeparate our ſelves from them, and from all others, who do not live according to the Precepts of the Goſpel.

III. St. *JOHN.*

THIS Letter is directed to a Chriſtian named *Gaius*. St. *John* praiſes the Zeal which this faithful Servant of God had for the Truth, and his great Charity. He recommends to him ſome Perſons, who ſtood in need of Aſſiſtance. He complains of a certain Man named *Diotrephes*, who was an ambitious Perſon, and oppoſed St. *John*, and gives a good Character of *Demetrius*.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Epiſtle we may obſerve, I. The tender Love St. *John* had for *Gaius*, on account of his Piety and Charity, and the great Joy he felt at ſeeing him in ſo good a State; this likewiſe ſhews, that the Miniſters of the Lord do never conceive more ſincere Pleaſure, nor ſweeter Comfort, than when they know

that thoſe, whom they look upon as their Children, do walk in the Paths of Truth. II. The Example of *Gaius*, who received Believers and Strangers with ſo much heartineſs, and whoſe Charity was of ſo good a Savour in the Church, ſhould ſtir us up to do good to all our Brethren, and particularly ſuch as flee, and are perſecuted for the Goſpel. III. What he ſays here of *Diotrephes*, who aſpired at being the Chief, and even oppoſed St. *John* himſelf, ſhews, that great Evils may befal the Church, when there be Perſons who refuſe to ſubmit to Order, and eſpecially if there be ambitious Miniſters, that Lord it over others. But, on the contrary, 'tis a great Happineſs when the Miniſters are humble and pious, and ſuch as every Body will ſpeak well of, as was *Demetrius*. IV. We ſhould carefully attend to theſe Words of the Apoſtle; *Beloved, follow not that which is Evil, but that which is Good. He that doth good, is of God; but he that doth Evil, hath not ſeen God.* This is what diſtinguiſhes true Chriſtians from Impoſtors and Deceivers, and 'tis by this likewiſe that we ſhould examine our ſelves, and regulate our Behaviour.

St. JUDE.

St. *Jude*.

I. 
THIS Epiſtle was writ againſt Deceivers, and prophane Perſons, that were ſlipp'd into the Church, againſt whom St. *Jude* denounces the Judgments of God. II. The Apoſtle repreſents theſe Deceivers as carnal Men, and addicted to Impurity, Enemies of the Powers, and of all Order, Diſobedient, Quarrelſome, Proud, vain in their Speeches, and Self-intereſted. III. To preſerve the Believers from being ſeduced by ſuch Perſons, he puts them in Mind of the Prophecies of the Apoſtles, and exhorts them to continue in the Love of God by Faith and by Prayer; to endeavour to deliver from Error, thoſe that were engaged therein; and for that purpoſe, to make uſe of Meekneſs towards ſome, and of a wholſome Rigour towards others; to be upon their own Guard againſt every thing that might defile them, or cauſe them to

fall into the Deviations of thoſe falſe Teachers, and their Followers.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Warnings which St. *Jude* gave formerly againſt the Prophane Perſons of his Age, are not leſs neceſſary at preſent, ſince there are ſuch a great Number of Libertines, who turn Religion and the Grace of God into Diſſoluteneſs and Impiety, wherefore every one ought to be upon his Guard againſt ſuch Perſons. II. For this purpoſe, we ought carefully to obſerve the Deſcription which St. *Jude* makes againſt thoſe prophane Perſons, and to learn from thence, particularly to avoid ſuch, who either by their Opinions or Behaviour, manifeſt their Inclination to Impurity and Pollution, who will not be in Subjection to the higher Powers, who are proud and vain, and make Religion ſubſervient to their Intereſt. III. The Example of the Puniſhment which God formerly inflicted upon the rebellious Angels, and upon the Inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, who had given themſelves up to the moſt infamous Pollutions; and the ancient Prophecy of *Enoch*, which St. *Jude* here relates, do all prove, that ſuch Libertines and impious Perſons ſhall not eſcape the Judgment of God, and that He will take a very ſevere Vengeance upon them. IV. St. *Jude* teaches us, that the Way to preſerve our ſelves from being ſeduced by theſe prophane Perſons is, to remember that Chriſt and the Apoſtles have warned us, that there will be many ſuch in the laſt Times. For which purpoſe, we ſhould read and meditate the ſacred Writings, and to ſuch Reading and Meditation, we ſhould join Prayer and Watchfulneſs, as St. *Jude* exhorts

horts us by theſe admirable Expreſſions: *But ye, Beloved, building up your ſelves on your moſt holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghoſt, keep your ſelves in the Love of God, looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto Eternal Life.* Laſtly, This Apoſtle informs us, that it is not ſufficient to ſecure our ſelves from the Errors of prophane Perſons, but that Charity requires, that we ſhould endeavour to deliver others, who are engaged therein, making uſe, to that end, either of Gentleneſs or Severity, and of all other Methods that Prudence and Zeal may ſuggeſt to us.

Revelations.

THIS Book is called the Apocalypſe, or Revelation, becauſe it contains the Revelations which God made to St. *John* in the Iſle of *Patmos*, where he was baniſhed. The three firſt Chapters relate to the Churches that were then eſtabliſh'd in *Aſia minor*, and the following ſhew what was to happen in the Church till the End of the World. In this Book there are ſome Places that are pretty clear; but there are likewiſe Viſions and Prophecies which are obſcure, becauſe they are not yet fulfilled; for which reaſon we ſhall paſs by ſome of the Chapters thereof.

CHAP. I.

I. IN this Chapter, St. *John* ſpeaks of the Uſefulneſs of the Prophecies that are contained in this Book. He wiſhes the Grace of God to the ſeven Churches of *Aſia*, and foretels

tels the Coming of Chriſt. II. In the next Place, he relates a Viſion, in which our Lord appeared to him.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE Beginning of this Chapter teaches us, that the Reading and Meditating upon this Revelation is very profitable. Accordingly we ought to make a good Uſe of the things which it contains; and although we find in this Book ſome Prophecies that are hard to be underſtood, yet we may find great Benefit in the Reading it, as well upon the Account of the ſeveral Inſtructions it contains, as becauſe of the Predictions in it, of which we have already ſeen the Meaning and the Accompliſhment. II. The Prayers and Thankſgivings with which St. *John* begins to expreſs the Sentiments that all true Believers ought to have, namely, to beg the Grace and Peace of God for themſelves, and for all the Churches, and to render fervent and continual Thanks *unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Prieſts unto God and his Father.* III. The Prophecy St. *John* makes of the Coming of Chriſt, ſhews, that the Deſign of this Book of the Revelation is, to warn Men of that Coming, which will be ſo comfortable to Believers, and ſo dreadful to the Wicked. IV. In this magnificent Appearance of our Lord, which is here related, we may obſerve chiefly, the Majeſty of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Care He takes of his Church; this is the Meaning of that Deſcription which is here made of the Glory in which our Lord appeared to St. *John*, and of what he ſays, that the ſeven Candleſticks of Gold, in the midſt of which was Chriſt, repreſented the ſeven Churches of

Aſia;

Aſia; and that the ſeven Stars which He held in his right Hand, ſignified the Angels, that is, the Biſhops and Paſtors of thoſe Churches. This teaches us, that *Chriſt* is in the midſt of his Church, that He governs it, that He ſees every thing that paſſes therein, and that the Paſtors thereof are eſtabliſhed there by his Authority. This ought to be a great inducement for Paſtors, and all Chriſtians, to relie upon *Chriſt*, to ſerve Him faithfully, as being always under his Eyes, and as knowing that He is the King, and ſupreme Paſtor of the Church, and Judge of all Men.

CHAP. II. 1,——11.

THIS part of the ſecond Chapter of the Revelation contains two Epiſtles, which St. *John* writ by the Order of *Jeſus Chriſt*. I. The firſt is directed to the Angel, that is to ſay, to the Biſhop of the Church of *Epheſus*, and to all his Flock. Our Lord praiſes the Faith of that Church, but reproaches them of the Coldneſs and Abatement of their Charity, and threatens to take away their Candleſtick, that is, to deprive them of the Preaching of the Goſpel. II. The ſecond Letter is directed to the Church of *Smyrna*. Our Lord commends her alſo, but foretels that ſhe ſhould be Perſecuted, and exhorts her to Perſeverance.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. TO benefit by this and the following Reading, it muſt be obſerved in general, that *Chriſt* ſays in theſe Letters to all the Churches: *I know thy Works.* Which teaches us, that the State of every Church is perfectly known to Him, and that he ſees all the Good and Evil thereof.

thereof. II. That *Chriſt* repeats in all theſe Epiſtles the following Words: *He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the Churches.* This warning denotes the Importance of the Things which St. *John* writ in theſe Epiſtles by the order of our Lord, and obliges us to liſten very ſeriouſly to them. III. That at the End of each Epiſtle, our Lord maks glorious Promiſes to thoſe that *overcome*, that is to ſay, to thoſe that conquer Temptations, and perſevere to the End in Faith and Obedience. Laſtly, that the Threatnings which *Chriſt* makes in theſe Letters, to the Churches of *Aſia* minor, were executed afterwards, as we ſee even at this Day, by the ſad Condition to which thoſe Churches, that were formerly ſo flouriſhing, are now reduced.

In the two Epiſtles which we have juſt read, we may obſerve, I. That *Chriſt* commends thoſe two Churches for not ſuffering wicked Men to remain in them; by which we learn, that we muſt not ſuffer falſe Teachers in the Communion of the Church, ſuch as were the *Nicolaitans*, of whom mention is made in the Letter to the Church of *Epheſus*. II. The Reproaches *Chriſt* makes this Church for having forſaken its firſt Charity, becauſe of which he threatens to remove its Candleſtick, ſhew that God withdraws his Protection from Churches that fall into Relaxation and Lukewarmneſs, eſpecially in reſpect to Charity, and that He ſuffers them to be perſecuted, and even deſtroyed, as it happened ſome Time after to the Church of *Epheſus*. III. We ſee in the Epiſtle to the Church of *Smyrna*, that God does ſometimes expoſe Chriſtians to Perſecution, but that it ought not to ſhake their Conſtancy ſince He does not abandon them, in thoſe Trials, but beſtows the Crown of Life upon thoſe that are faithful to Him until Death.

CHAP.

CHAP. II. 12,——29.

WE have here two Epiſtles which *Chriſt* cauſed to be writ, one to the Church of *Pergamos*, and the other, to the Church of *Thyatira*. I. He praiſes the Faith and Conſtancy of the Church of *Pergamos*, and exhorts her not to endure thoſe who retained the Doctrine of *Balaam* and of the *Nicolaitans*; thoſe were falſe Teachers, that drew away Chriſtians to acts of Idolatry and Impurity. II. He gives the ſame Advice to the Church of *Thyatira*, and ſpeaking of *Jezebel*, by whom he underſtands the ſame Seducers, he threatens them, and thoſe that followed them too, with Deſtruction; and he exhorts this Church to perſevere in the purity of the Faith.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE may make the four following Reflexions upon theſe two Epiſtles: I. *Chriſt* praiſes the Churches of *Pergamos* and *Thyatira* for their Steadineſs under Perſecution, which appeared particularly in the Martyrdom of *Antipas*; as alſo their Charity, and their Faith, and takes notice that their laſt Works exceeded their firſt. From thence we may gather, that that which renders Churches agreeable to the Lord, is Conſtancy in Affliction, Perſeverance in Faith, and Progreſs in Piety and in good Works. II. We ſee that our Lord reproves theſe Churches for ſuffering among them falſe Prophets, who taught that it was lawful to eat of things ſacrificed to Idols, and who by their Doctrine and Example engaged Chriſtians in Impurity, in Senſuality and Idolatry. Theſe reproaches, which Chriſt repeats more than once, ſhew

ſhew that we ought not to tolerate in the Church ſuch as corrupt the Purity of Faith and Manners by pernicious Doctrines, and particularly, thoſe that live in Impurity, or entice others thereto; and that the Churches which ſuffer theſe Perſons, and theſe Offences, do what is very diſagreeable to *Chriſt*, and draw upon themſelves his Indignation and Wrath. III. We obſerve in the Epiſtle to the Church of *Thyatira*, that God warns the falſe Teachers, and impious Perſons, and gives them Time to repent; but that if they don't lay hold on his forbearance, He puniſhes them, and they who join with them are involved in the ſame Judgments. IV. Our Lord declares expreſly here, that He will judge all thoſe who ſuffer themſelves to be led away by Error or Vice; but that He will glorioufly reward thoſe who remain Steadfaſt in their Obedience to Him. This is what the following Words, which are well worthy our Conſideration, do ſignifie: *All the Churches ſhall know that I am He that ſearcheth the Reins and Hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your Works.* —— *He that overcometh, and keepeth my Works unto the End, to him will I give Power over the Nations:* —— *Even as I received it of my Father.*

CHAP. III.

THIS Chapter contains, I. The Epiſtle to the Church of *Sardis*; *Chriſt* reproves her ſharply, for having only the Name and Appearances of Chriſtianity; He exhorts her to repentance; He threatens her; and promiſes his Favour to thoſe Members of that Church, who had preſerved themſelves undefiled. II. The Epiſtle to the Church of *Philadelphia*. He praiſes her Zeal and Steadfaſtneſs, and makes her

her particular Promiſes of his Protection. III. The Epiſtle to the Church of *Laodicea*, our Lord reproves her for her Lukewarmneſs, and for the good Opinion ſhe had of her ſelf; He exhorts her to come out of this dangerous State, and improve his Corrections, and the Invitations to his Favour.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. IN this Church of *Sardis*, which had the Appearance of Life, but was really dead, and in danger of being overwhelmed by the Judgments of God, we have the Picture of ſeveral Churches, that do only make a Shew of Chriſtianity, and which are therefore likewiſe threatened to be deprived of the Love and Protection of *Jeſus Chriſt*; but as there were at *Sardis*, ſome Perſons who had kept themſelves pure, and whom God was pleaſed to ſpare; we ought likewiſe to believe, that in this preſent general Corruption, there are likewiſe ſome Elect, that have kept themſelves undefiled, and whom God will gloriouſly diſtinguiſh from wicked and falſe Chriſtians. In the Epiſtle to the Church of *Philadelphia*, we muſt obſerve that our Lord praiſes her above all the Churches of *Aſia*, promiſing to diſtinguiſh her, and ſecure her from thoſe Evils with which the reſt were threatened. This was alſo what happened; this Church having been ſpared when the reſt were deſtroyed, and having ſubſiſted even to our Days, in a pretty happy Condition. This is a very expreſs Inſtance of the Favour and Protection of God over thoſe Churches where Piety prevails. The Epiſtle to the Church of *Laodicea* teaches us, *firſt*, that Lukewarmneſs in Piety is altogether odious to the Lord, that He rejects Lukewarm and half Chriſtians, and that

that we cannot pleaſe Him, but by a ſincere and fervent Zeal. *Secondly*, That thoſe who being corrupted and diſſolute, think they are in a good State, are in a moſt dangerous one; and that in order to extricate themſelves from it, they ſhould learn to know themſelves well, to have a lively Senſe of their Miſery, and to ſeek for a Cure in the Grace and Goſpel of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. *Thirdly*, That God corrects thoſe whom He loves, and that He does it to awaken their Zeal, and bring them to Repentance. *Fourthly*, That our Lord offers his Grace to Men, and invites them to Repentance with much Patience and Goodneſs, as He himſelf expreſſes it by theſe Words: *Behold, I ſtand at the Door and knock: If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.* Let us be ſenſible of theſe Invitations which our charitable Redeemer makes us, and let us receive them with eagerneſs and gratitude, to the End we may enjoy his bleſſed Communion. The Lord grant us this Grace!

CHAP. IV.

I. ST. *John* here relates a Viſion, in which God appeared to him, with the Characters and Marks of his Majeſty. He alſo ſhews the Praiſes wherewith the Saints celebrate his Glory, and return Him Thanks.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WE ſee in the Viſion that is here related, I. Tokens of the Glory and Majeſty of God, which ought to inſpire us with Sentiments of Reverence and Fear for the great God whom we adore; we likewiſe ſee here, the Glory

with which the Saints, who are repreſented by the Four and twenty Elders, and by the four Animals, are crown'd in Heaven. II. What is ſaid in this Chapter, that the Saints, who were about the Throne of God, did continually praiſe Him Day and Night, and caſt themſelves down before Him, worſhipping Him who liveth for ever, ſets before our Eyes the Happineſs which the Faithful ſhall enjoy one Day, and ought to ſtir us up to endeavour after the ſame. It likewiſe teaches us to diſcharge even now this Duty, which will then be the everlaſting Employment of the Bleſſed; namely, to praiſe God, to render Him our Homage, and to ſay always, and with all our Heart; *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.* —— *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power: for thou haſt created all Things, and for thy Pleaſure they are, and were created.*

CHAP. V.

THIS Chapter contains, I. The Viſion of the Book ſealed with ſeven Seals, which could not be opened but by the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*, and by the Lamb, that is to ſay, by Chriſt. II. A Song which the Saints pronounced in praiſe of our Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THERE are two Obſervations to be made upon this Chapter. I. That though we don't know exactly what is denoted by this Book ſealed with ſeven Seals, yet that which is farther ſaid, that no Body could open this Book but *Jeſus Chriſt*, teaches us, that He knows all that is foretold in this Prophecy, and that it is

is He likewiſe who can give the Explication thereof, and who will bring about its Accompliſhment; which obliges us to conſider the Predictions of this Book with Reverence. II. We have in this Chapter, a noble Pattern of the Praiſes we ſhould render to *Jeſus Chriſt* our Redeemer, in that He has ſuffer'd Death for us, and in having redeemed us by his Blood. Let us therefore bleſs him for ever; let us join our Thankſgivings to thoſe of Thouſands of Angels, and of all the glorified Spirits, ſaying with them: *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wiſdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Bleſſing. — Bleſſing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be unto Him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

CHAP. VI. 9, —— 17.

I. ST. *John* relates the Complaints of the Souls of the Martyrs, and that which was anſwer'd to them. II. He deſcribes next, the Judgments of God upon the Wicked, and the Deſpair with which they will be overwhelmed when God ſhall come to puniſh them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THE firſt Inſtruction this Reading gives us is, that we muſt not think it hard nor ſtrange if God ſuffers his Saints to be perſecuted, or their Blood to be ſpilt; it appears from hence, that God deals thus with them for wiſe and juſt Reaſons; that if He does not immediately revenge the Blood of his Servants, He will not fail to do it when the Number of their Brethren ſhall be accompliſhed; and that in the mean time the Souls of his Saints are pre-

ſerved, and enjoy reſt, in expectation of the Day of their final Deliverance, and of their Glory. II. We ſee here a lively Deſcription of the Terror and Deſpair with which thoſe who perſecute the Faithful, and all the other Enemies of God, are ſeiz'd at the Coming of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, and which is ſo pathetically deſcribed by theſe Words: *And the Kings of the Earth, and the great Men, and the rich Men, — hid themſelves in the Dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains; and ſaid to the Mountains and Rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the Face of Him that ſitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb: For the great Day of his Wrath is come; and who ſhall be able to ſtand?* Let theſe Expreſſions be often preſent to our Mind, to the End that they may retain us in a continual Fear, and that we may avoid this terrible Condemnation and Deſpair, which will one Day be the Portion of the Wicked, and of all the Enemies of our Lord.

CHAP. VII.

WE ſee two Things in this Chapter. I. God forbids the Angels of his Wrath to hurt his Elect. II. St. *John* repreſents here, the Happineſs and Triumph of the Saints, and particularly of thoſe that ſhall have ſuffered for Truth.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. THO' we do not know exactly to what the firſt Verſes of this Chapter relate, yet we may gather from the Command which was given to the Angels, to do no harm to thoſe Elect of God that were marked with his Seal, that God knows all his faithful Servants, that they

they are very dear to Him, and that He ſpares them when He ſpreads his Judgments over the Inhabitants of the Earth, and that He will ſkreen them from his Wrath at the laſt Day. II. This Chapter repreſents, in a very moving Manner, the Triumph and Glory of the Bleſſed, and particularly of the Martyrs that ſhall have ſuffer'd for Chriſt; the Joy that ſhall be heaped upon them after their Labours, and the Felicity which God reſerves for them. St. *John* tells us, that they *ſhall ſerve Him Day and Night in his Temple: and that He that ſitteth on the Throne ſhall dwell among them. That they ſhall Hunger no more, neither Thirſt any more, —For the Lamb which is in the midſt of the Throne, ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them unto living Fountains of Waters; and God ſhall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes.* Let us meditate upon theſe glorious Promiſes with a continual Application; and ſince the heavenly Felicity is deſtined not only for Martyrs, but all thoſe that ſhall keep themſelves pure in this World, and ſhall glorifie God by their Patience and Obedience, let us excite our ſelves more and more to Piety and Holineſs, in the Hope of ſo great a Glory. God grant us this Grace!

CHAP. XII.

ST. *John* relates in this Chapter, I. The Viſion he had of a Woman with Child, who repreſented the Church, and of a Dragon that would have devoured the Child of that Woman; by which, St. *John ſays*, we are to underſtand the Devil, who ſhould make furious Attempts to deſtroy the Church, and the Believers. II. He relates afterwards the Victory which the good Angels obtained over the bad

ones, the Praiſes which the Saints returned to God on that Account, and the Perſecutions which the Devil was to raiſe againſt them.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THO' the Meaning of the Viſion, contained in this Chapter, is not altogether known, yet we may gather from it that which follows, for our Edification, *viz.* I. That the Devil was to oppoſe the Church, and to endeavour its Deſtruction. II. That the Church would be in a State of Oppreſſion for the Space of *Twelve Hundred and ſixty Days*, or *three Years and a half*. This Term, which is mention'd more than once in this Book, denotes, if we take a Day for a Year, according to the Stile of the Prophecies, that theſe Times of Oppreſſion, or the Kingdom of Antichriſt, were to laſt *One Thouſand, two Hundred and ſixty Years*. III. We ſee in this Chapter, that the Attempts of Satan againſt the Church ſhould not be able to prevail, and that he would at laſt be overcome by the Power of *Jeſus Chriſt*; but that nevertheleſs God would permit that thoſe who kept his Commandments, and retained the Teſtimony of our Saviour, ſhould be perſecuted for a Seaſon. Theſe Things were written to ſupport the Faith of Believers in all Ages, and eſpecially when they ſhould be expoſed to Perſecution.

CHAP. XIV. 1,——13.

WHAT we are going to read, ſets before our Eyes, I. The Joy and Happineſs of the Faithful, and the Thanks which they will render to God when his Kingdom ſhall be perfectly

fectly eſtabliſh'd, and that of Satan deſtroyed. II. The Fall of *Babylon*, that is to ſay, of the Kingdom of Antichriſt, and the Puniſhment of thoſe who ſhall have adhered to his Errors, and his Crimes. III. The Happineſs of thoſe who die in the Lord.

Reflexions after the Reading.

I. WHAT we are firſt to conſider upon this Chapter is, that St. *John* ſaid, that he ſaw a Multitude of the Elect of God waiting upon him, and ſinging a new Song before his Throne; but that none could ſing this Song, ſave thoſe who had not defiled themſelves, who had followed the Lamb, and in whom no guile was to be found. This teaches us, that the Happineſs of the Saints will be infinite, and that they ſhall be continually with God; but that none will be admitted to the Communion of the Bleſſed, but thoſe who ſhall have kept themſelves pure, and have renounced themſelves, carrying their Croſs, and conſtantly following Chriſt their Saviour. II. We learn from hence, that the Time will come, when ſpiritual *Babylon*, which ſignifies the Kingdom of Antichriſt, ſhall be deſtroyed, with all thoſe that ſhall have partaken of its Idolatries and Crimes, and that the Puniſhment of the Enemies of the Church, of the Apoſtates, and of the Wicked, ſhall laſt for ever and ever. III. We have here a very poſitive Declaration, by which we learn, that thoſe who die in the Lord are bleſſed, that they reſt from their Labours, and that their Works do follow them. Theſe aſſurances which the Spirit of God gives us, of the happy State of Believers after their Death, ſhould ſtir us up to a holy Life, to the end we

may look upon Death with boldneſs, and that living to the Lord we may likewiſe die to Him. God grant us this Grace. *Amen.*

CHAP. XVII.

THIS Chapter contains a Prophecy concerning the great Whore, and of myſtical *Babylon*, and concerning the Deſtruction of the ſaid Kingdom.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Explanation given at the End of this Chapter, of the Viſion which is there related, may ſerve to diſcover the meaning of it, the Spirit of God ſaying expreſly, that the great Whore had her Rule in the City, which ſtood upon ſeven Mountains, and reigned over the Kings of the Earth; by which it is plain that we are to underſtand *Rome*. If to this we join the Deſcription which is here made of the Kingdom of that great Whore, the Characters given to her, *viz.* Idolatry, Corruption of Manners, Tyranny, Cruelty and Perſecution againſt the Saints, and that ſhe would ſeduce Nations and Kings; all theſe things agree ſo well to what has been ſeen for ſeveral Centuries in the Church, and to the Condition in which Religion was found during thoſe Ages of Ignorance and Corruption, that we cannot forbear applying this Prophecy to thoſe Times. Theſe Reflexions engage all ſuch as God has enlightened with a Knowledge of the Truth, and that have the Liberty of worſhipping Him according to the pure Light of the Goſpel, to render Him their moſt hearty Thanks for the ſame. It ought likewiſe to confirm us in the Profeſſion and Love of Truth, make us wait with Aſſurance

rance for the entire Deſtruction of the Kingdom of Sin and Error, and ſtrongly excite us to a pure and Chriſtian Life; ſince it would be of no Uſe to have a Belief conformable to the Goſpel, and to make a free Profeſſion thereof, if we remain engaged in Impurity, and the Pollutions of the World.

CHAP. XIX.

ST. *John* deſcribes in this Chapter the Joy which the Saints will conceive when myſtical *Babylon* ſhall be deſtroyed, and when God ſhall have eſtabliſhed his Kingdom.

Reflexions after the Reading.

WHAT we have now read, teaches us, that God will deſtroy the Kingdom of Antichriſt and of myſtical *Babylon*, that He will ſtrip it of all its Glory, and that He will revenge the Blood of the Faithful which ſhe ſhall have ſpilt, and puniſh her for all her other Crimes. We ſee likewiſe in this Chapter, how great will then be the Joy and Triumph of the Saints, and the Praiſes they ſhall render to God, for his having perfectly eſtabliſhed his Kingdom. Tho' theſe Prophecies are not yet fulfilled, they may ſerve for the Comfort and Confirmation of our Faith, whilſt we wait for the Accompliſhment of theſe glorious Events, and make us aſpire to that Glory and Felicity wherewith all the Elect of God ſhall be Crowned in Heaven. Laſtly, They oblige us to conſider, that it will not be only thoſe who have adher'd to Error and Idolatry, or who have forſaken and perſecuted the Truth, that ſhall taſte of the divine Vengeance, and be caſt into the Lake of Fire; but that it will likewiſe be the Portion of

of all thoſe who ſhall not have obeyed the Truth, but ſhall have ſuffer'd themſelves to be led away by the World, and by the Corruption that reigns therein. As for the reſt, that which is obſerved in the tenth Verſe, when St. *John* caſt himſelf at the Feet of the Angel who ſpoke to him, *viz.* that the Angel ſaid: *See thou do it not: I am thy Fellow Servant, and of thy Brethren that have the Teſtimony of Jeſus: Worſhip God.* This, I ſay, teaches us, that we are not in any manner whatſoever to worſhip any other Being but God; and that therefore the religious Adoration that ſhould be paid to Saints or Angels would be exceeding criminal.

CHAP. XX.

THIS Chapter has two Parts. I. In the former, St. *John* foretels that Satan ſhall be bound, and that Chriſt ſhall reign with the Saints and Martyrs a *Thouſand Years*. II. In the latter, he ſpeaks of the laſt Judgment.

Reflexions after the Reading.

IN this Chapter we have two very remarkable Prophecies. I. The firſt is, that Satan ſhould be bound for the Space of a *Thouſand Years*, and that then our Lord would reign gloriouſly with the Martyrs. Now, tho' we do not well know the whole Meaning of this Prophecy, yet we may infer in general, that there will be a Time when the Church ſhall enjoy Reſt, and ſhall be more pure and holy than ſhe has ever been, and that then the Saints, and eſpecially the Martyrs, ſhall be crowned with a ſingular Glory. This will probably come to paſs when all Nations being converted, and the Kingdom of Antichriſt deſtroyed, the

Lord

Lord ſhall reign glorioufly in his Church. After which, Satan ſhall be bound, and the Church ſhall undergo ſome Perſecution before the World be at an end. II. The ſecond Prophecy relates to the laſt Judgment. We ſee by what St. *John* ſays of it, the Majeſty in which Chriſt will appear at that Day, the general Reſurrection of all Men, their ſtanding before the Throne of our Lord, who will judge all according to their Works, and the Iſſue of his Judgment, *viz.* that the Wicked ſhall be caſt into the Lake of Fire. Theſe great Truths ought to be always preſent to our Mind, and engage us to pray, and to labour continually at our Advancement in Piety, to the end, that at that Day, ſo formidable to the Wicked, we may appear before our Lord with Confidence, and our Names be found in the Book of Life.

CHAP. XXI.

I. ST. *John* does here deſcribe the Renovation of all Things, which will be at the End of the World, the Joy prepared for the Righteous, and the Puniſhments which are reſerved for the Wicked. II. He repreſents next, in figurative Terms, and by magnificent Images, the Heavenly *Jeruſalem*, the Glory of the celeſtial Kingdom, and the eternal Happineſs of the Elect.

Reflexions after the Reading.

THE Deſcription St. *John* makes of the new *Jeruſalem*, teaches us, that at the End of Ages, all things will be renewed, and that then the Kingdom of God, and of his Saints, will appear in all its Glory; and we may judge by the great and ſplendid Types which the Spirit of

of God makes uſe of in this Chapter, what will be the Beauty and Pomp of that glorious Eſtabliſhment, to which the Saints ſhall be admitted, where God will dwell with them, where He will wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and where He himſelf will be their Glory and their Happineſs. This ought to excite in us ardent Deſires to be of the Number of thoſe that ſhall be received into the Heavenly *Jeruſalem*; and ſince it is written, that no polluted Thing ſhall ever enter therein, and that the Portion of Unbelievers, of Cowards, of unclean Perſons, of Murderers, of Idolaters, of Liars, and of other Sinners, ſhall be the Lake burning with Fire and Brimſtone; let us with great Zeal ſet about purifying our ſelves, to the end that we may be thought worthy to be admitted into Heaven, to contemplate the Beauties thereof, and to be put in Poſſeſſion of that ſupream Beatitude, of which we have a Picture in the Chapter we have juſt now read. God grant us all this Grace! *Amen.*

CHAP. XXII.

I. ST. *John* continues to deſcribe the Glory and Bleſſedneſs of the Life to come. II. He confirms the Truth of the Prophecies contained in this Book, and relates the Command which the Angel had given him to publiſh them. III. He ſays that Chriſt would come quickly to receive the Saints into his Glory, and to puniſh the Wicked, and ſhews the earneſtneſs wherewith the Faithful wait for this laſt Coming of their Saviour.

Reflexions

Reflexions after the Reading.

THIS Chapter, which is the laſt of the *Revelations*, and of all the holy Writings, ſets before our Eyes, the End and Conſummation of all Things. We ſee here, how great will be the Glory and Happineſs which the Saints ſhall enjoy everlaſtingly in the Preſence of God, and of *Jeſus Chriſt* their Saviour; and we may alſo learn here, that none will be admitted to this Happineſs but thoſe who endeavour after it, and who keep the Commandments of God; but that the Impure ſhall be excluded from thence for ever. Thus we ſee what will be one Day the Lot of good and bad Men, and what God propoſes to do at the End of the World. Since He has ſo expreſly warned us thereof, let us be continually meditating upon it, let us remember, that all theſe Things are moſt certain, and that God vouchſafed to reveal them to St. *John*, to the end that they might be written in this Book, for the Inſtruction and Edification of the Church in all Ages; and upon what the Angel ſaid to St. *John*, let us conſider, that theſe Truths do not produce the ſame Effects upon all kind of Perſons; that the Wicked are corrupt and defiled daily more and more, whilſt the Righteous and the Saints are continually improving themſelves; but that the Lord will come to judge them all, as He himſelf has declared at the End of this Book, ſaying: *Behold, I come quickly; and my Reward is with me, to give every Man according as his Work ſhall be.* Let us continually pant after this Coming, and let us ſay with the Bride, which is the Church, and with all her true Children, *Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly.* Amen.

Here

Here Ends the New-Teſtament.

God grant us the Grace to make a good Uſe of all that we have here read and heard, to meditate upon it, and to practiſe it our whole Lives, to the Glory of God our Father, and to the Advancement of our own Salvation.

The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, be with us all. Amen.

FINIS.

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